

THE TABLOID

That funny frock

THE TABLOID

EDUCATION

20-page pull-out full of university appointments

BUSINESS & CITY

Mobile phone bills to soar PAGE 22

Sensation! Tory minister does the decent thing*

Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent
Christian Wolmar
Political Correspondent

David Willetts, the Paymaster General, yesterday paid the price for writing an infelicitous memo and compounding the offence by misleading fellow MPs as he tried to talk his way out of his difficulty.

He quit as a minister immediately after the publication of a report in which he was sharply criticised by the Tory-dominated Standards and Privileges Committee which examined the allegation that he attempted to subvert a Parliamentary inquiry into the Hamilton cash for questions affair.

The speed with which Mr Willetts departed was intended to limit the damage to the Government but did nothing to dispel the impression that this is an administration in its death throes. Mr Willetts's replacement is likely to be announced today.

Although the Committee made no recommendation, Mr Willetts's resignation became inevitable because of its unequivocal, and strong, wording and the use of the word "dissemble" to describe his evidence. The unanimous report said that its members "were very concerned that any member should dissemble in his account to the committee and believe that this response by Mr Willetts has substantially aggravated the original offence".

Indeed, the MPs were more angered by Mr Willetts's performance when he appeared before the committee in October than the substance of the complaint which was that in October 1994 he tried to influence the Hamilton inquiry. The feeling among the committee was

that if Mr Willetts had said "sorry", he would have received a rap on the knuckles. But the fact that he gave such an unconvincing account made a strongly worded report, and therefore his fate, inevitable.

The Government immediately mounted a damage-limitation exercise, furiously attacking the committee for its findings and describing Mr Willetts as an "honourable man".

"It is a grotesque and unfair judgement on a fine minister.

committee member Quentin Davies for the strong language of the report.

The extent to which the MPs doubted the accuracy of Mr Willetts's evidence to them is shown by the fact that the Committee has taken the unprecedented step of requiring future witnesses to give evidence to them on oath.

Mr Willetts's resignation letter said: "I am sorry my integrity has been called into question, especially as throughout the Com-

"was no clear evidence that Mr Willetts set out to influence Sir Geoffrey or that he succeeded in doing so."

One senior minister, close to Mr Willetts said: "It's a travesty of justice. It is grotesque and an unfair judgement on a fine minister." Quentin Davies, the Tory MP whose public grilling of Mr Willetts at the committee hearings six weeks ago was particularly damaging to the minister, was singled out for criticism by Tory colleagues. One said: "I would not like to be Quentin Davies tonight."

The committee, which took almost 20 hours of debate to reach its unanimous decision, was not split on party lines but a few of the Tories held out until yesterday against the strong wording of the report. The unanimity of the report, and its strong wording, is a triumph for those MPs who have strongly resisted any outside involvement in the policing of their activities. By bringing all the members into line, it is a personal triumph for the chairman of the committee, Tony Newton. The committee is now expected to consider the case of Andrew Mitchell, another former whip and now a minister, who is also the subject of allegations that he attempted to limit the inquiry into the Hamilton affair.

John Major said last night that Mr Willetts's resignation was "consistent with the dignified way that you have conducted yourself". Ministers did not rule out the possibility that Mr Willetts could work for Central Office as political strategist in the election campaign and predicted that he would back on the front bench after the election.

*Two brains' Willetts, page 2
Leading article, page 19
Comment, page 21

***But then David Willetts' colleagues always thought he was a little odd**

He will be back. He is a man of honour and it was totally wrong," said one angry Government whip.

Another whip said: "It is a travesty of justice. He was pursued by one man, Quentin Davies - the Tory MP who gave Mr Willetts a relentless grilling when he appeared before the standards committee."

Downing Street said the Prime Minister had not tried to persuade him to stay on. "Mr Willetts is an honourable man and he had said very firmly that he believed the only course for him was to resign."

The Tory MP David Martin, whose Portsmouth South constituency neighbours Mr Willetts's in Havant, blamed what he called the "boorish and bullying" behaviour of the Tory

ministry hearing I told the truth." However, he felt "the only honourable course is to resign".

The committee criticised Mr Willetts, then a junior government whip, for having discussed with Sir Geoffrey Johnson Smith, the chairman of the now-defunct members' interest committee, "a matter critical to the future deliberations of his Committee" in October 1994. Mr Willetts had discussed the Hamilton affair with Sir Geoffrey and then wrote a memo which implied that he had tried to ensure the committee either did not consider the Hamilton case, or undertook a quick inquiry that "exploited the good Tory majority".

However, the committee largely cleared him of the original allegation, saying there



David Willetts, with his wife Sarah at their home in Chiswick, after announcing his resignation Photograph: Peter Macdiarmid

Risking cancer just to stay thin

Liz Hunt
Health Editor

Lung cancer is set to overtake breast cancer as the biggest cancer killer of women, the UK's leading epidemiologist warned yesterday, as new data highlighted a dramatic rise in the number of young women who smoke.

Health educators say the cult of the Supermodel is largely to blame for the increase as more girls use cigarettes for weight control - nicotine is an appetite suppressant - and to relieve stress.

The teenage wannabes copy thin, glamorous role models such as Kate Moss who is rarely seen without a cigarette off the catwalk, and who allegedly has no qualms about taking part in stunts which use cigarettes as props.

Earlier this year Ms Moss and fellow model Stephanie Seymour caused an uproar in America after appearing naked and smoking - in *Playboy*.

The Health Education Authority yesterday reported a



Up in smoke: Young female staff at The Independent who still light up regularly

5 per cent rise in smoking prevalence among 16- to 24-year-old women between 1994 and 1996. A third of this age group now smokes.

This trend is a result of more smokers among the 11- to 15 age group who are continuing to smoke into young adulthood, and a simultaneous increase in "late starters". Just under 30 per cent of 16-24 year

old female smokers took up smoking after the age of 16.

Traditionally, many women quit smoking or try to give it up when they start families in their late twenties and thirties, and prevalence starts to fall. But the HEA data says that around 30 per cent of pregnant women are continuing to smoke.

Professor Sir Richard Doll, the scientist who first established

the link between lung cancer and smoking, and who presented the new data, said that smoking-related deaths among women have been gradually rising while those among men have fallen. This is largely the result of the historic patterns of smoking with women taking up the habit decades later than men.

However, the new figures

for young women have alarmed doctors because they suggest that the long-term health effects of smoking will persist for decades to come in women, despite intense health education efforts.

Sir Richard warned that if present trends continue, more women will be dying from lung cancer than breast cancer within five years. This is already the case in some cities such as Glasgow and Liverpool.

Five women smokers die every hour from diseases caused or exacerbated by their habit, about 42,500 annually, and up 11,000 on previous statistics published in 1991. The figure for men is 77,500.

Overall, the number of smoking-related deaths annually has increased by 10,000, from 110,000 in 1991 to at least 120,000 per year. The new projections are based on US data from a long-term study of one million smokers.

The HEA's "Quit Smoking for Life" campaign begins on radio and television on 30 December 30 with a focus on women.

QUICKLY

Veterans 'poisoned'
Government medical experts yesterday admitted that 54 Gulf War veterans are being examined for possible pesticide poisoning. Page 2

Ripping yarns
The television community was last night speculating that ITV's bawdy romp *Moll Flanders*, which finished on Monday and featured 17 sex scenes, would unleash a spate of copycat bodice-rippers. Page 3

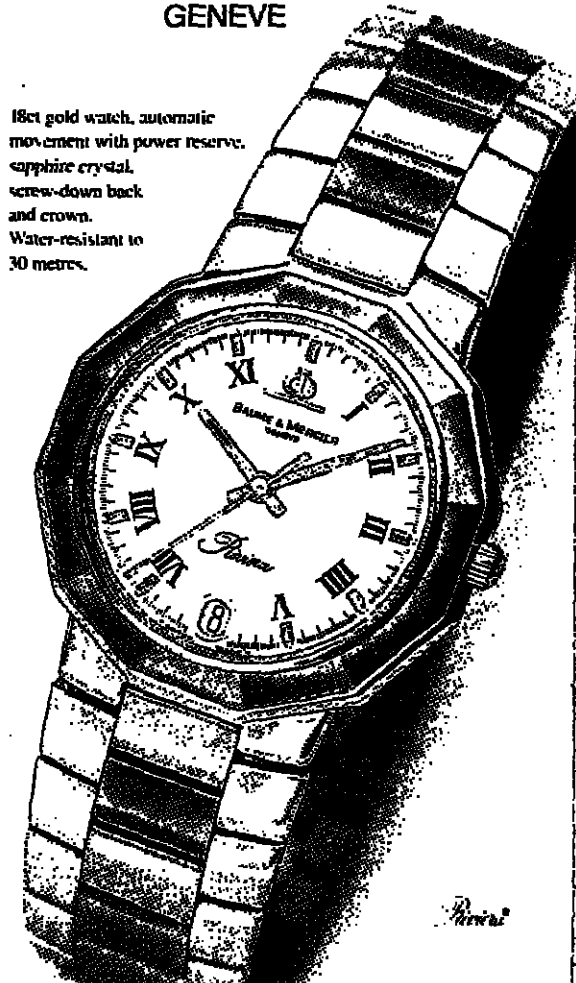
CIA's drugs deal
The CIA actively encouraged drug-trafficking in order to fund right-wing Contra rebels in Nicaragua during the 1980s, according to an investigation for ITV's *The Big Story* screened tonight. Page 12

CONTENTS

<i>The Broadsheet</i>	
Business & City	22-26
Comment	19-21
Foreign News	11-16
Gazette	18
Home News	2-10
Law Report	18
Leading Articles	19
Letters	19
Obituaries	18
Sport	27-30
Unit Trusts	26
<i>The Tabloid</i>	
Arts Reviews	19
Campus	12
Crossword	22
Dilemmas	11
Features	8-10
Film	4-7
Graduate Plus	13
Listings	20, 21
Radio & TV	23, 24
Weather	22

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€ = end to currency speculation

Sarah Helm
Brussels

A no-entry sign. A squashed pound. A bent banana. Whatever you think of the new euro symbol, you'd better get used to it. The European Commission yesterday unveiled the symbol for the single currency, in the latest drive to win public support - and affection - for monetary union. E is for euro. E is for Europe. And E is for excitement. That is the message from Brussels, though cynics

might say E is for Error. The Commission drawing of the logo comes in cheerful yellow on blue - the colours of the EU flag.

Barring strong objection to the design from member states, there now seems little doubt that the logo will be accepted as the euro's definitive symbol. Monetary union could start as early as 1999. Although the euro notes and coins will not be in circulation until 2002, the symbol is expected to start appearing on vending machines,

computers and calculators well before. Prices on goods will also be printed in euro alongside the national currency prices, ahead of the launch, so consumers can get used to calculating values.

Publication of the symbol on the eve of the European Union Dublin summit is clearly intended to give a boost to the drive towards the single currency and add a sparkle to complex negotiations on the euro-zone. Germany, loathe to see its own dear DM disappear into history, is at logger-heads with

other member states over the rules which will govern the single currency. But while technical disputes continue, leaders will nevertheless be able to assert that the euro is already ready to take its place alongside the £, the \$ and the ¥ as a world-currency symbol.

In another sign of rapid progress, the design of the euro notes is to be unveiled in Dublin on Friday. After intense debate it has been decided to leave space for a small national symbol, which means the Queen's

head could yet appear on the euro if Britain decides to sign up for a single currency.

The note designs will be based on different European themes. The drawings will depict different ages in European history, showing, for example, famous Europeans and monuments. Preparation for the euro coins, by Europe's mint masters, is also well underway, and the European Commission plans to launch a competition for the design of the coin faces in the New Year.



news

One word from Clarke causes Major spasm

Sketch writers must always be careful of phrases such as "historic speech" and "watershed". In newspapers there are wiser and better-paid people whose job it is to decide such things. But yesterday I think I witnessed a watershed, and I want to tell you about it.

When Ken Clarke stood to open the debate on Europe there were twice as many Tories in the Chamber as members of the combined opposition. The Prime Minister himself was present, along with all the most active Europhobes and pro-Europeans. This was not a debate between the Government and Opposition, but a special session of the Conservative Party.



The benches behind Ken seethed. Half of them believe there is a German conspiracy to dominate Europe

conference. Tony Blair (who has a country to think about) stayed away.

Mr Clarke's speech was frank, clear, intelligent and almost heart-breaking. It also cannot possibly be what John Major wanted to hear. Constantly interrupted by the large gang of Redwoodites and former whipless ones, the Chancellor's exegesis took the form of balancing the advantages of a single currency against the disadvantages: "upsides and downsides".

And the upsides were very good, for they included low inflation, enhanced competitiveness and lower interest rates. All the downsides, however, were couched in terms of the circumstances of the establishment of a single

currency. This was summed up in a question by the Liberal Democrat, Malcolm Bruce. If, therefore, the circumstances were right, would the Chancellor be in favour of a single currency? The answer (which caused a day spasm to pass across the PM's countenance) was yes.

No wonder the benches behind Mr Clarke seethed. Half of them actively believe that there is a German conspiracy to dominate Europe, and that the single currency is the Nineties version of the V2. In their own minds they are fighting a battle very nearly as important as that which their fathers – the Captain Mainwaring and Private Pike – fought 50 years ago. Mr Clarke's predecessor, Norman Lamont, angrily quoted Bundesbank officials

as saying that a single currency must lead to a loss of national control over tax and other fiscal policy. "Hans Tietmeyer does not speak for Germany," said Mr Clarke. "And you don't speak for us!" a Tory shouted back.

Sir Peter Tapsell did speak for them, however, when he took Ken to task for not realising that a single currency was "part of a bureaucratic, centralising, socialising, federal state". Many puzzled over the socialising, since outside the Calvinist Church socialising is not considered to be a sin. But we knew what he meant.

Meanwhile, Bill Cash tried vainly to intervene. Every time he stood he did up the button on his jacket, and every time he sat down – thwarted – he undid it again.

It was a metaphor for futility, like the stone of Sisyphus, that button seemed destined never to attain resolution. When, finally, the Chancellor allowed the button's owner to make his point, one almost expected Mr Cash to unzip his trousers by way of celebration.

And what emerges from all this? Why do I leave off my usual facetiousness to argue that this exchange was so important? Because Mr Clarke told the Tories that, if things go the way he wants them to, he will be pushing to join a single currency. And that is exactly what they cannot stand. Now, both sides would rather see a Labour government than relent. The Europhobes then get their chance to run the party, and Ken Clarke will see his policy carried through. By Gordon Brown.

Bid for new office of state

Judith Judd
Education Editor

Labour should raise the status of the Secretary of State for Education by moving him or her into No.9 Downing Street, one of the party's senior policy advisers suggested yesterday.

Professor Michael Barber, dean of new initiatives at London University's Institute of Education, said in his inaugural lecture that Tony Blair must make education a great office of state in order to fulfil his party conference promise that his priorities would be "education, education and education."

The new Education Secretary should be expected to stay in post for the entire Parliament and might be placed second after the Prime Minister and before the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the press release announcing a new Cabinet, Professor Barber said.

"Perhaps like the Chancellor, the Secretary of State for Life-long Learning should have a house next door to No.10. Who lives at No.9?" he asked.

On being moved to the Department of Education in 1986, Kenneth Baker remarked that it was "like moving from the manager's job at Arsenal to Charlton. You cross the river and move down two divisions."

Though most of us would see any move away from Arsenal as promotion, Professor Barber commented, Mr Baker clearly had a different view.

Under Labour, he said, there should be an end to the feuding which had bedevilled the relationship between the Prime Minister and the Education Secretary since the time of Butler and Churchill.

Callaghan had rowed with Shirley Williams over his Ruskin speech on standards; the Education Department was so angry that it leaked the speech to the press.



Arts in arms: Darcy Bussell and Plácido Domingo at the Royal Opera House, in advance of its first fundraising Gala

Photograph: David Rose

Gulf War vets examined for pesticide poisoning

Ian Burrell

Government medical experts yesterday admitted that 54 Gulf War veterans are being examined for possible pesticide poisoning. Up to 200 others have illnesses which doctors cannot explain.

The admissions were made to MPs during oral evidence given to the Commons defence select committee which is examining Gulf War syndrome.

Nicholas Soames, the armed forces minister, admitted on Tuesday that Parliament had been misled over the use of

organophosphate chemicals in the Gulf. He announced a £1.3 million study to investigate illnesses suffered by Gulf veterans.

The committee was told by Dr Edgar Buckley, assistant under secretary at the MoD, that an investigation into the action of staff who caused ministers to mislead Parliament would report in February.

"We were not just misleading ourselves, he said. "There are *prima facie* grounds for concern that something seriously went wrong." Following

discovery of the error, Group Captain Bill Coker, who headed the Gulf medical assessment team until last month, reviewed more than 800 sets of medical notes to look for veterans who might be suffering from organophosphate poisoning.

Fifty-four veterans have been recalled and are being re-examined by the medical assessment team before going for sophisticated tests at the Institute of Neurology. Group Capt Coker revealed two of the 10 people who dusted Iraqi prisoners with delousing powder

were ill. He also disclosed that 20 per cent of the veterans examined – almost 200 – have symptoms that cannot be explained.

"It is this group that presents the greatest problem," he said. "If you want to apply the term syndrome, you could to this group." Michael Colvin, the committee chairman, said there were deep concerns about the length of time investigations into the health of Gulf veterans have taken so far.

He underlined anxieties that the £1.3 million study would take a further three years.

"There are some people who may well be dead before the results of the survey are known and that is totally unacceptable," he said.

Bruce George, the deputy chairman, said: "This money hardly amounts to a row of beans. It is not remotely commensurate to the suffering and the problems created – and ignored – by the Ministry of Defence."

He asked Mr Buckley to pass on a request that ministers should "cut their losses" and make an interim compensation payment to veterans.

significant shorts

Hollywood blamed for violence

Hollywood's obsession with macho action films, rather than lax censorship controls in Britain, is to blame for the high levels of big-screen violence, Michael Howard, Home Secretary, was told yesterday.

The British Board of Film Classification was powerless to exert influence on the money-spinning violence culture personified by the films of Arnold Schwarzenegger and Sylvester Stallone, said director James Ferman.

The BBFC's report to Mr Howard follows the launch by Virginia Bottomley, Secretary of State for National Heritage, of an action plan against violence on television.

Mr Ferman said gratuitously violent scenes could be cut out of films and videos, but such cuts could not change the culture of the film if it was dedicated to violence.

Knives Bill wins backing

A Labour MP's Private Member's Bill on combat knives got full Government backing. The Bill, sponsored by Jimmy Wray, the MP for Glasgow Provan, will allow the police to stop and search people in specified areas for 24 hours if they believe they may be carrying knives, and creates a new offence of marketing a knife suitable for use as a weapon for inflicting injury on a person, in a way which suggests "combat" or aggressive use. Patricia Wynn Davies

Retrial for gun PC

The Old Bailey trial of an armed police officer accused of murdering a suspected car thief was halted for legal reasons and the jury discharged. PC Patrick Hodgson, 49, will face a retrial next year. He has denied murdering 38-year-old David Ewin who was shot in Baines, south-west London last year.

Buxton beauty

The Crescent in Buxton, Derbyshire, once rated the most dilapidated Grade I listed building in England, has begun a new lease of life, spruced up at cost of £1.5m. The building, designed by John Carr of York in 1779 and built by the Duke of Devonshire was on the verge of collapse five years ago. The campaign to save it involved the first and only compulsory purchase order by the Department of National Heritage and the first 100 per cent repairs grant by English Heritage. It is now owned by High Peak District and Derbyshire County councils. Stephen Goodwin

'Rape' officers remanded

Six army officers appeared in court charged with raping a woman on a campus where they were studying. The six, who serve with the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, were charged with raping the 23-year-old between 27 and 28 May this year at the Royal Military College of Science at Shrivenham, near Swindon, Wiltshire. They were remanded in custody by magistrates at Wantage, Oxfordshire.

BBC plea on Murdoch's digital TV

Rupert Murdoch's digital software company, News Datacom, should be obliged to license its set-top box technology to all manufacturers and broadcasters, if Britain is to avoid handing him a monopoly in digital pay television, the BBC said.

In its final effort to convince the Government to change its policy on the regulation of digital decoders, the BBC warned that without mandatory licensing, there was a risk that the market for digital channels of television, electronic banking and home shopping, would be dominated by one player.

"This is the last chance to create an orderly, open market in digital TV where everyone will benefit," Patricia Hodgson, BBC director of policy and planning, said. "But the government's latest proposals still risk creating uncertainty for competition and consumer." Matthew Horsman

Orangemen's hard-liner

The Orange Order chose a religious hard-liner as its new Grand Master, increasing apprehensions that next July could see a repeat of last year's traumatic Drumree marching controversy. Robert Saulters, who was previously Belfast County Grand Master, was elected to the Order's top job by 200 members of its Grand Lodge. He succeeds the Rev Martin Smyth MP, who had been criticised for not taking a strong enough line over parades. David McKittrick

'Independent' writers win

Three Independent writers scooped prizes in the Norwich Union Healthcare and Medical Journalists' Association Medical Journalism awards.

Glenda Cooper, consumer and social affairs reporter, shared a combined second and third prize for an article on schizophrenia with Rita Carter, a freelance who was recognised for a feature on morphine. Rob Stepney, another regular contributor, was commended.

Jolyon Jenkins took first prize for a report for BBC Radio's *File on Four*. Liz Hunt

'Adoptive mother killed'

A two-year-old boy was shaken to death by a woman who was caring for him as he awaited the go-ahead to adopt him, a court heard. Angela Harris, 40, shot Patrick McKenzie go head that he suffered brain damage from which he died. Leeds Crown Court was told. Harris, of Yeading, near Leeds, denies murder.

Helping him

A flashing green jellyfish is helping the fight against cancer. The fluorescent protein which the creature flashes on and off as a defence mechanism is being used to light up parts of living cells. By incorporating the genes into the DNA of human cells, it is possible to give human proteins a fluorescent "tag" and as a result scientists can see how individual proteins in a cell move when the cell divides. Glenda Cooper

Pride that led to minister's fall

Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

Pride was probably what caused the downfall of David Willetts because he tried to argue his way out of the allegation that he had tried to fix a select committee inquiry report.

Labour and Tory members of the 11-man committee said if he had apologised, he would have been let off with a light reprimand, and his career would have been intact.

But it was a single word – "dissembled" – that sealed his fate.

When he read the report at 1.30pm in his office overlooking Whitehall in the Cabinet Office, he decided he had no option but to resign. He saw the Prime Minister at around 3pm but senior party sources said his

mind was made up. The ferocity of the report stunned MPs on all sides. They queued at the vote office in the members' lobby to get hold of the 60-page report. Within minutes, nearly 100 had been handed out. It had been hammered out over near-

Dissemble: v 1, intr. conceal one's motives; talk or act hypocritically; 2 tr. a disguise or conceal (a feeling, intention, act etc) b (as dissembled adj.) simulated, pretended... (Concise Oxford Dictionary).

ly a week of meetings by the committee. The "killer paragraph" – that in future the committee would take evidence on oath – was agreed at an early stage.

The Tories suggested that he should be charged with con-

tempt of the House. Some Labour MPs suspected that it was put up to be knocked down, to let Mr Willetts off the hook. It was rejected on the ground that it was outside their remit.

But the fatal word "dissembled" was inserted at the end, on Monday night, in scenes of acrimony and high drama. Locked in disagreement in a committee room of the Commons, Labour MPs had suggested they should say they had found Mr Willetts's evidence to the committee unacceptable.

Quentin Davies, the Tory MP whose tenacious questioning of Mr Willetts in public session was blamed by ministers for inflicting the damage, suggested they should say they were concerned Mr Willetts should "dissemble" in his account.

Christian Wolmar
Westminster Correspondent

David Willetts has been woefully unlucky and, for such a clever chap, woefully stupid. He was unlucky in that the memorandum that brought his downfall would normally never have been made public.

The memo would not have come to light had it not been for Neil Hamilton's ill-fated libel action against *The Guardian* newspaper for alleging that he had taken cash to ask questions on behalf of Mohamed Al Fayed, the owner of Harrods. It was only when the case collapsed that the memo was leaked to the press and subsequently sent to the Speaker.

Mr Willetts is famously clever, his large pate having earned him the epithet of "two

brains", but he is not necessarily very smart. Indeed, a smarter fellow might not have put down in a memo the result of the conversation with Sir Geoffrey Johnson Smith, chairman of the Commons committee investigating the Hamilton affair. Certainly, Mr Willetts was over eager to please the senior whips by showing his diligence.

He had only arrived in Parliament as MP for the safe seat of Havant in 1992 and was made a whip in the July 1994 reshuffle. Mr Willetts is not the sort of chap who should be made a whip. He is likeable and has none of the required bully-boy characteristics.

He clearly was not cut out for the job. Indeed, after a couple of years, he was moved to the Treasury as Paymaster General, where he would have served

in relative obscurity had it not been for that fateful memo.

Mr Willetts came to Parliament as one of the Tories' best original thinkers from a career in think tanks and writing books and pamphlets. Born 40 years ago in Moseley, Birmingham, he spent five years as director of studies at the Centre for Policy Studies and was in Mrs Thatcher's policy unit from 1984 to 1986.

His reputation of cleverness did not really help Mr Willetts at the committee hearing. His erudite ratiocapitulating did nothing to endear him to the members of the committee which reprimanded him. The report makes it clear Mr Willetts would have been better served by coming clean, rather than trying to box clever. That was his worst act of stupidity.

GRRR AHA MMM'S PORT

Just roll it round your tongue.

W & J
GRAHAM'S
THE PORT OF AUTHORITY

The genteel mood of British costume drama has been challenged by the success of ITV's *Moll Flanders*

Bodice-ripping challenges Jane Austen TV cult

Marianne Macdonald
Media Correspondent

The television community was last night speculating that ITV's bawdy romp *Moll Flanders*, which finished on Monday and featured 17 sex scenes, would unleash a spate of copycat bodice-rippers.

For its triumphant ratings success has single-handedly broken the taboo that costume drama is best a la Jane Austen: understated, genteel and very definitely sex-free.

The mid-Nineties reinterpretation of the genre, as demonstrated by *Moll*, has demolished that theory. Virgins can be replaced with wenches, ballrooms with brothels. Chastity is out. Sex, even incest, is in.

It is the last bastion to fall in television drama, and contrasts with the latest clean-up campaign by Virginia Bottomley, the National Heritage Secretary, to clean up television's act.

The four-hour adaptation of Daniel Defoe's bodice-ripper about a woman who marries five times, once to her brother, works as a pickpocket and thief and is finally transported to America won 13 million viewers.

That contrasts with the BBC elegant drama, also just finished, of Anne Brontë's *The Tenant of Wild-*

Jell Hall. With the emphasis on avoiding sex rather than having it, the dark story of a virtuous and unhappy wife attracted four million fewer viewers.

The moral is that sex and violence sells; and that costume drama, long seen as the special preserve of tinkling teacups, honourable aristocrats and grand country houses, has moved into new territory.

The approach is even mirrored in the *Moll Flanders* video of Granada's production, which hit the shops on Tuesday. Unlike the Austen spin-offs of coffee-table books with lavish pictures and diaries, the *Moll* video offers a chance to see the steamy sex scenes which were left on the cutting room floor.

The taste for bursting corsets has not gone unnoticed. Yesterday Nick Elliott, ITV's controller of drama, said the bodice-ripping element had undoubtedly attracted viewers. "There was a pleasantly tasteful element of sex and nudity and I know many men positively enjoyed Alex Kingston taking her top off from time to time. Don't let's beat about the bush, it was very pleasant."

Granada agreed. "*Moll* attracted higher audiences than any other recent costume drama, including *Pride and Prejudice*, and viewers that

might not otherwise have watched," a spokesman said jubilantly.

So now the barriers are down, can we really expect a flood of bodice-rippers on television? Well, not yet, but executives have swung away from light and elegant period dramas with a vengeance.

Over the next few months viewers can look forward to stronger meat. ITV will show *Jane Eyre* — attempted bigamy, a madwoman in the attic and the suffering of a bullied orphan — and *Rebecca*, that tale of adultery and arson.

Also scheduled is *Far From the Madding Crowd*, which features insanity, murder and marital neglect, and the swashbuckling adaptation of a Robert Louis Stevenson short story, *Ebb Tide*, with Robbie Coltrane.

The BBC mirrors the approach with adaptations of Joseph Conrad's *Nostromo*, about a struggle to seize a nail of silver in South America. Wilkie Collins' *The Moonstone*, about the theft of a diamond, and *Ivanhoe*, a tale of kidnap and tournament spiced with witchcraft.

But producers still scouring the classics for bodice-rippers will find plenty of choice. The 18th century, which produced *Moll Flanders*, has much to offer. From Smollett to Richardson, possibilities abound.

Five of the best ripping yarns

Bodice-rippers ripe for adapting?

Clarissa by Samuel Richardson
Provoked complaints on its 1748 publication about its indecency and would be a scriptwriter's nightmare to adapt, but a racy epistolary tale about the dishonourable rake Lovelace's courting of the chaste Clarissa Harlowe — and how he finally rapes her.

Roxana by Daniel Defoe
Similar to *Moll Flanders* and by the same author, but still one to bear in mind. Roxana, the beautiful daughter of French refugees, is de-

serted by her extravagant brewer husband and passes from one protector to another getting extremely rich on the way. But unlike *Moll*, she comes to a bad end and dies penniless.

Amelia by Henry Fielding
Set in a London of almost unrelieved squalor and violence, the hero begins the story in Newgate prison; he shares a cell with a courtesan and turns to gambling to the distress of Amelia, his virtuous wife.

Fanny Hill by John Cleland
Otherwise known as *Memoirs of a*

Woman of Pleasure, this early best-seller resulted in the author being summoned before the Privy Council for indecency. A breathless account of the less respectable side of life in the mid-18th century.

Mary Barton by Mrs Gaskell
A love story set amid the crushing working-class poverty of Manchester in the 1840s. Mary Barton is a factory girl whose virtue is under siege from the rich son of a factory owner. When he is shot dead, suspicion falls on her other poorer, sulkier, Jem, who faces the death penalty.



The old primness: Jane Austen adaptations, like ITV's *Emma*, may be a thing of the past as raunchier classics gain popularity



The new bawdy: *Moll Flanders*, Daniel Defoe's tale of a woman married five times, has scored a hit, with 13m viewers

Willie Rushton, humorist, satirist, artist, dies at 59

David Lister
Arts News Editor

Willie Rushton, the comedian, satirist, author, actor and a man who listed his recreations as "losing weight" and "gaining weight", has died after a heart operation at the age of 59.

Rushton one of the architects of the Sixties satire boom, co-founding the magazine *Private Eye* and appearing on the seminal TV programme *That Was The Week That Was* alongside David Frost in 1962.

But his versatility was greater than many of his more lauded colleagues. It extended from a stage debut in Spike Milligan's *The Bed-Sitting Room* in 1961 to the authorship of best-selling novels and such reference works as *How To Play Football*, *The Art Of Dirty Play*, *Pignicking*, *A Joy For Life*.

On radio he broadcast in 27 series of the anarchic game show *I'm Sorry I Haven't A Clue*. As a cartoonist he ranked among the best. Examples of his work are at present on display at the National Portrait Gallery.

Rushton's genial demeanour and quickfire repartee made him a chunky, bearded frame a staple on television comedy and quiz shows from the Sixties onwards.

And in the last few years he had been enjoying a spirited comeback as a stand-up comedian in a double act with his fellow comic Barry Cryer. Their show, *Two Old Farts*, delighted audiences at the Edinburgh



Rushton: Most talented member of *Private Eye* generation

Festival and on subsequent nationwide tours.

Rushton, who was married with three sons, died at the Cromwell Hospital in London after a short illness, his agent Roger Hancock said. It is understood he had a heart operation, but suffered a reaction.

His comic leanings began among a starry generation at Shrewsbury School where he fell in with a group that included his future *Private Eye* co-founders

Richard Ingrams, Paul Foot and Christopher Booker. A lack of Latin O Level prevented Rushton from joining his friends at Oxford University.

But he rejoined them at *Private Eye* where he contributed cartoons as well as writing. On *That Was The Week That Was* he mimicked Harold Macmillan with a patrician accent he was to use to great effect in many future impersonations. Last night Sir David Frost paid trib-

ute saying: "Willie Rushton just went on getting wittier and funnier with every passing year."

In November 1963 he took political satire out of the studio and on to the hustings, standing at the Perth and Kinross by-election against the Prime Minister, Lord Home, who needed a seat in the House of Commons. Rushton only managed 45 votes, but addressed a large public meeting where he denounced "the completely arrogant way Lord Home has moved into Downing Street."

Richard Ingrams said he was "terrifically shocked" by his friend's death. He said: "I think he was the most talented of my contemporaries by far. He had a brilliant spontaneous wit. I knew Willie from the age of 12, when we first started doing jokes together and he was a very good cartoonist even then. He was a brilliant cartoonist, a born cartoonist who had no training. It was completely natural to him."

"He was very well adjusted to things. When he became diabetic a few years ago, he took it in his stride and said that he was grateful because it made him give up drinking."

A keen cricketer, Rushton was a member of the Lord's Taverners. Yesterday, the comedian Barry Took remarked: "I can't imagine the Lord's Taverners or British life without him. He was a decent honest man, who laughed a lot."

RSVP - and bring the olive oil

The chic dinner party set no longer take a bottle of wine with them along as a gift for the host. The popularity of cookery television programmes and books has helped fire diners' imaginations and they are now taking a bottle of good olive oil or expensive vinegar.

More and more people are buying olive oil as a gift so that the cook or the person who's keen on cooking has something different to have in the kitchen, according to Tony Greenwood, the grocery and

confectionery buyer at Selfridges.

"It's more thoughtful than a bottle of wine which is a little less imaginative."

"It's a slightly different idea and a good cook would want to have more than one oil in their kitchen."

Dinner guests might pay as much as £18 for their chosen token of appreciation, which would probably be a tasteful bottle of single estate extra virgin olive oil from northern Italy.

But the really generous might decide to splash out on a bottle of 40-year-old balsamic vinegar, costing £50 for 10cl.

"The sky is the limit so far as balsamic vinegar is concerned. It's dark and sweet and nothing like the vinegar you put on your chips," said Mr Greenwood.

"With the very old vinegar the flavour is such that you almost need to use a pipette for it." Another new gift trend — though rather less costly — is panettone, the Italian bread-like cake.

"They have always been beautifully presented and are designed as a gift. It tastes good and it looks good," said Mr Greenwood.

But the surprise sell-out food gift is another Italian cake called *Veneziana Farcita*. Costing £5.99, it contains zabaglione, a custard made with Marsala wine, and is made in Castelfranco, near Venice.

After the store conducted a tasting, all the cakes on the shelf were sold within minutes.

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Europhiles fight back: Treasury fights to meet currency criteria

Jiggery-pokery used to squeeze into EMU

Anthony Bevins and Diane Coyle

The Treasury has been accused of using "tricks" to help keep the Budget deficit below the financial ceiling set for membership of the European single currency.

Economists estimate Continental-style "wheezes" have helped trim the figure for the Public Sector Borrowing Requirement by more than £3.5bn. That is enough to reduce the government deficit as a share of GDP from 2.9 per cent – uncomfortably close to the 3 per cent Maastricht ceiling – to a relatively impressive 2.5 per cent.

The chief accounting ploys were classed as the sale of the student loan book and the sale of Ministry of Defence homes, together worth £2.2bn in 1997/98, as negative spending, reducing the Government's planned expenditure total.

"All governments are doing these things, and we are no different from the others. Perhaps just a little bit better," said Peter Warburton, an economist at Robert Fleming in the City of London.

But in a BBC radio interview earlier, Kenneth Clarke, Chancellor of the Exchequer, complained that other countries cheated as they tried to fit into the financial terms created for single currency membership.

"The public accounts of most countries have, I am sure, had jiggery pokery in them from time to time, certainly careful presentation – except of course that of Her Majesty's Treasury in this country."

"People have made the books look better by putting things in which don't count."

But one senior government source told *The Independent* that it was accepted within the Treasury itself that some of its

own accounting devices were "no good either".

In the Commons, Mr Clarke said at the start of a two-day debate on Europe that it was not enough to meet the single currency entry terms – "convergence criteria" – in just one particular year.

"They must demonstrate a credible commitment to durable and sustainable convergence. That is the key. That is what the Treaty says, and that is the basis on which decisions about who should join Economic and Monetary Union must be taken. It is certainly the basis upon which this Government would take its decisions and cast any votes at the relevant time."

In a powerful speech, the Chancellor tried to reassure the Tory sceptics – who continually intervened to inject doubt and concern about the threat of a federal Europe.

The hostility of his own side

was made clear in interventions by a series of backbenchers – from the former Chancellor, Norman Lamont, Tony Marlow, Sir Peter Tapsell, Bill Cash and John Wilkinson.

The Shadow Chancellor, Gordon Brown, told the House that while Mr Clarke had spoken with enthusiasm, passion and conviction, the question was whether he was speaking for the Conservative Party, the Government, or the Prime Minister.

He pointed out that when the Chancellor had addressed the advantages of a single currency, there had been jeers from his own side; cheers when he had spoken of the disadvantages.

While the Government has ensured that there should be no vote at the end of the two-day debate tonight, Tory rebels might take the opportunity of a vote on European fisheries policy, on Monday, to stage yet another protest against Europe.

One Nation Tories show their teeth

Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

Tory MPs led by David Hunt, the former Cabinet minister, yesterday called on John Major to keep the Conservative Party on the centre ground of British politics and to reject the "ideological tendency" on the Tory right.

Conservative Mainstream, which is supported by a number of ministers, including Nicholas Soames, the Minister for the Armed Forces, issued an alternative manifesto to counter the demands of the Eurosceptics for Mr Major to fight the coming election on their manifesto. It will be seen as a clear warning to the party leadership that

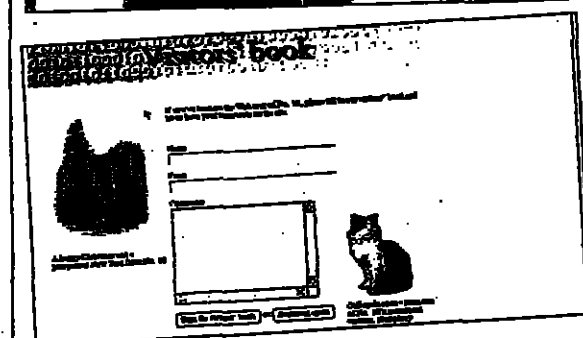
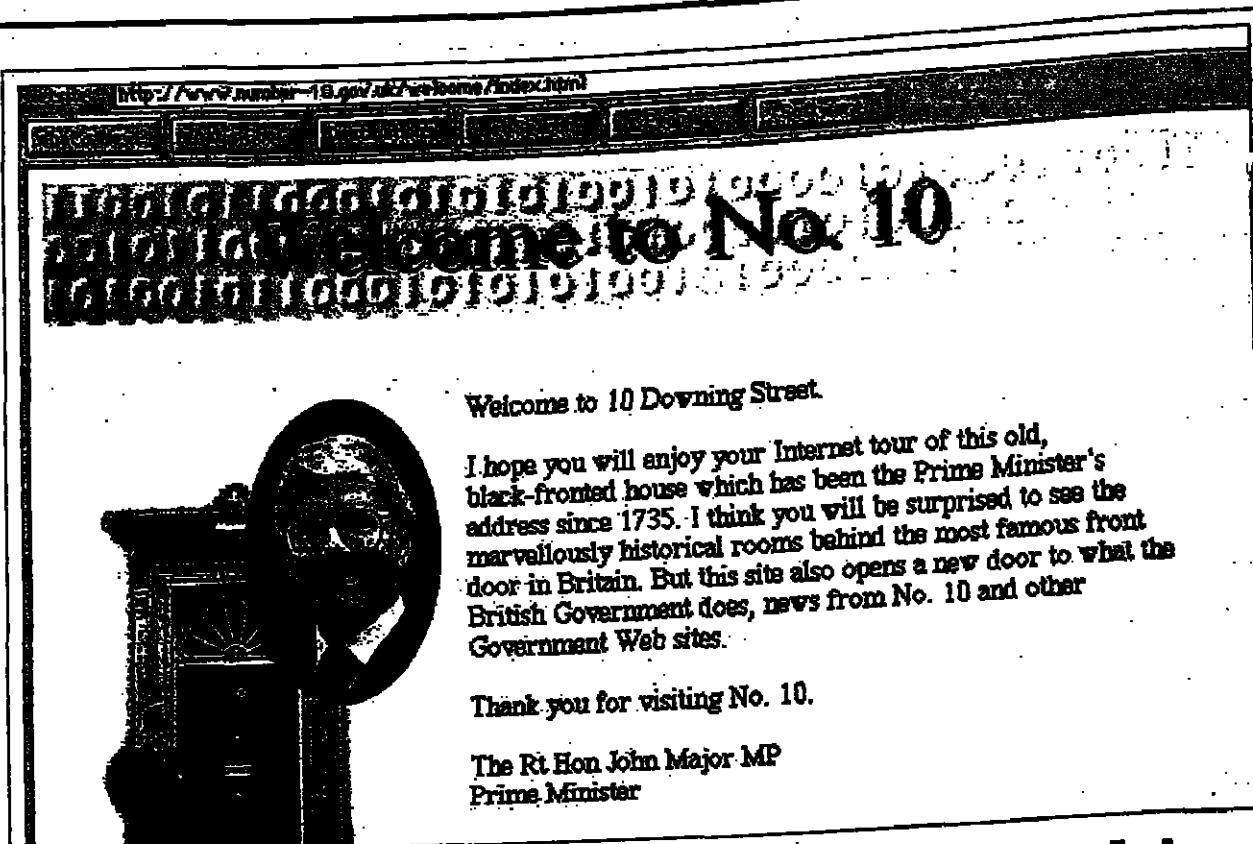
any move to the right would threaten a backlash from the centre-left of the party.

They warned: "Our party is more likely to be successful in future if, as in most periods in the past, it remains a party of all the people and not beholden to any sectional interest or narrow ideological tendency."

The manifesto was backed by Sir Geoffrey John Smith, vice-chairman of the Maceod group, and drawn from a conference in the summer at which the speakers included John Gummer, one of the leading pro-Europeans in the Cabinet, Douglas Hurd, the former Foreign Secretary, and Ian Taylor, another strongly pro-European minister at the Department of Trade and Industry.

Other supporters include: Andrew Rowe, Peter Bottomley, Peter Butler – the parliamentary aide to Kenneth Clarke, Robin Squire, Mark Robinson, Sir Jim Lester, Nigel Forman and Quentin Davies, seen as the leading lights on the centre-left of the Tory Party.

The group was created by Mr Hunt, former Secretary of State for Wales, to bring together One Nation Tories and members of the centre-left Maceod group. They could become important dissidents, if the Tory leadership was seized by the right wing. The Chancellor was last week alleged to have warned in a private lunch that a lurch to the right, and rejection of the European single currency could lead to a split in the Tory Party.



Key to Number 10: A greeting to surfers (top) and a farewell from Humphrey (above). Mr Major with children at Downing Street (below) Photograph: PA



Major enters his own virtual world

Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

John Major last night began life in a virtual world after opening 10 Downing Street as a World-Wide Web site on the Internet.

The Prime Minister has recorded a welcome message for downloading at the new Number 10 site, which opens with the familiar black doorway with policeman outside.

Surfers on the Internet are offered a history of the Premier's official London residence, with information on State Rooms. Recent speeches by Mr Major, biographies of recent prime ministers and the Cabinet, the Queen's Speech and notes on legislation going

through Parliament, with press releases, are also available.

Mr Major marked the launch by inviting pupils from The Donai Martyrs School in Uxbridge, west London, into Downing Street for an Internet link with their classmates.

Asked who was the most remarkable person he had ever met, Mr Major said: "If I answer that I will offend a thousand people, so I'll keep that revelation for later years."

The tour finishes with the Number 10 visitors' book, and its exit. Downing Street officials said Mr Major may open an e-mail address where the public could send him messages. The Internet address for Number 10 is: <http://www.number10.gov.uk/>.

Angry looks greet new Tory poster

Fran Abrams
Political Correspondent

The Conservative Party chairman was accused of "lies, half-truths and smears" last night after the launch of a new "demons eyes" campaign apparently featuring both Tony Blair and Paddy Ashdown.

The party's latest poster is adorned with the same pair of red eyes used in a widely criticised campaign against Labour, plus a pair of orange eyes which are equally menacing.

Its slogan, "Lib Dem-Labour – Double Danger" suggests that the Tories fear an alliance of the two opposition parties after the election.

The Liberal Democrats' chair of campaigns, Nick Harvey, wrote to Brian Mawhinney last night complaining that he had made false claims about the party's policies.

A leaflet bearing the new image and handed out in the West Country said a vote for the Liberal Democrats was a vote for the legalisation of drugs such as cannabis, for a United States of Europe, for Brussels control of immigration and defence, for higher taxes and for weak, multi-party government.

The party has agreed to set up a Royal Commission which would consider decriminalising cannabis, but would not legalise it. However, its conference has voted in favour of the move in the past.

Last night, Mr Harvey said his party would retain European veto on immigration and defence, would cut some taxes and

would offer a strong government based on consensus.

"Lies and smears demean the political debate and are not enough to save Tory skins. Brian Mawhinney must correct the lies, withdraw the mistaken attacks and recall the disgraceful posters and literature immediately," he said.

A Conservative Party spokesman said the points made all related to aspects of Liberal Democrat policy.

"The Liberals are running scared on this because they have been found out. These points will be driven home to the electors in the West Country in the weeks ahead," he said.



New Tory target: The Liberal Democrat leader Paddy Ashdown yesterday Photograph: Press Association

'Fat cats' take breakfast to improve their image

Christian Wolmar
Westminster Correspondent

The first meeting of the lobby group for the "fat cats" of privatised industries takes place this morning over breakfast at London's most expensive hotel, the Lanesborough, next to Hyde Park.

Over 50 chief executives and chairmen of privatised are expected to attend the gathering organised by Sir Colin Marshall, of British Airways, and John Neill, of Unipart. They say the meeting has been planned in order to give a better image to the privatised industries following years of bad publicity.

In a letter inviting the executives to the meeting, the two wrote: "Despite its evident suc-

cess, with clear benefits to the British economy as well as to consumers and employees, privatisation has attracted widespread criticism because of dangerously flawed perceptions. We think the time has come to redress the balance of public opinion."

The executives of the electricity, water and gas companies have all been invited, along with BT and other privatised companies such as Railtrack.

When news of the proposed meeting leaked out, it was suggested that the lobby group would campaign against Labour's windfall tax for privatised companies. However, in a second letter sent last week, Mr Neill stresses that this is not the case. He wrote: "Both Sir Colin's office and mine have

made it quite clear that the subject [of a windfall tax] was most definitely not on the agenda of the meeting. We have no intention that the efforts to improve the public image of privatised companies should include lobbying against plans for the windfall tax."

A spokesman for BA said yesterday that the intention of the meeting was to improve the overall standing of the privatised industries and "their contribution to UK plc".

They are an important part of BA's customer base and they have a vital role in teaching the world about privatisation, he said.

The lobbying group as yet has no name and no decision has yet been taken over how often it will meet.

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London gets gridlocked into its worst jam for years yet Britain's obsession with the car grows unabated

An undying love that is driving us to distraction

Glenda Cooper

Despite increased pollution, congestion and in the wake of the worst traffic jam in London for 16 years, the British are still unwilling to hand in their car keys and get on the bus.

Our love affair with the car continues to grow according to a new report from the London School of Economics, with car owners now spending an average £52 a week on their vehicle – more than on clothes and only slightly less than on food.

The report commissioned by the AA was unveiled only hours after 250,000 drivers were brought to a standstill for eight hours on Tuesday.

A lorry driver was responsible for the gridlock that paralysed much of east London after his vehicle became wedged beneath an overhead sign at the entrance to the Blackwall Tunnel. He had ignored warning signs that told him the crane on the back of his lorry was too high for the tunnel's 13ft 4in height restriction.

It hit an overhead gantry carrying warning signs about lane changes and the reinforced steel frame crashed down on to him. He escaped unharmed but thousands of other drivers were stuck as the rush-hour jam spread over a seven-mile area.

Police were yesterday refusing to name the driver responsible, dubbed "a total prat" by the Automobile Association, for his own safety. Some drivers were forced to abandon their vehicles and drivers in the Rotherhithe Tunnel, the closest Thames crossing to the Blackwall Tunnel had to breathe through handkerchiefs and scarves as fumes from the stationary traffic built up.

Despite incidents like this, the LSE report estimates that car ownership will continue to grow because more people want to drive and as prosperity grows, more will be able to afford to.

More than two in three households now have at least one car, and in homes where the head has a job more than half has two or more vehicles. In 1978, there were 17.75 million cars on Britain's roads; now there are more than 25 million.

The average household devotes 15 per cent of its expenditure to motoring and the proportion of its income to own and operate a vehicle has fallen by a third since the early 1960s due to increased standards of living and the falling cost of buying a car.

Wall of red lights on road to Hell

As I inched into the exhaust fume-filled maw of the Limehouse Link tunnel, a solid wall of red lights stretching off into the gloom.

I realised this was the gridlock from Hell. There was no going back and it was quite clear we were going to be there for some time. It had already taken more than half-an-hour to crawl the few yards from the Canary Wharf car park to the mouth of the tunnel that runs west from Docklands toward the City.

Fortunately, having been to the supermarket after leaving my office, I had bread and water. I might need them. I could be here for hours. Strange thoughts entered my mind. What were the toilet facilities? More seriously, would the extractors cope with the fumes? They ought to, this was, after all, the most expensive bit of road in London.

In the event, it was not so bad. It took 30 minutes to clear the tunnel; another hour's crawl to get home to north London, a journey that normally takes about a quarter of that time. And that was heading away from the Blackwall Tunnel. My sanity was saved by the stand up comedy tape I found. But it was not the only reason fellow motorists might have seen me laughing hysterically....

Terry Kirby

At the same time, public transport has become steadily more expensive, and many prefer to rely on their own vehicle any way because buses and trains cannot provide the flexibility for most of the trips people make.

Most of the nation now drives to work with the exception of those who work in central London. "People now live in the country away from work and rely on the car. Journeys to work by bus and rail on a national level are not very important at all," said Dr Stephen Glaister, author of the report.

In fact, the car is the dominant means of transport for most journeys – and is only beaten into second place for journeys of under a mile, by walking.

Demographic changes are also helping the inexorable rise of the car.

"There will be a generational effect," said Stephen Glaister, author of the report.

"Only 7 per cent of women over 75 who live alone have got cars at the moment. They often never had driving licences and if they had a car their husband drove it for them. But for women in their 40s, 70 per cent have driving licences so in 20 to 30 years they are much more likely to have a car."

As cars continue to fill our roads, the difficulty of how to cope with the overload remains a problem. "A time bomb is ticking under UK transport, as the new study clearly signals that more British citizens intend to buy and run cars because motoring is essential to daily life," said John Dawson, AA policy director.

"People see their lives being enriched by having a car. Seeking to deny these aspirations, rather than manage them, is a dead-end policy."

Options to deal with the situation could include providing more roads to ease congestion, or putting up the price of fuel to try to discourage frequent use of cars for short journeys. Roger Higman, senior transport campaigner for Friends of the Earth, called for more money to be put into alternative forms of transport. "The idea that people have become totally dependent on their cars is nothing new. The question is what can we do to encourage people off it. If the facilities were better more people would use public transport."

Dr Glaister writes in conclusion to the LSE report: "Very strong forces are going to carry on car ownership and the use of cars unless society faces up to this and makes a decision to stop it. We can't stick our heads in the sand – it won't go away."

Who Spends What on Motoring in the UK? AA, Norfolk House, Priestley Road, Basingstoke, Hampshire, RG24 9NY.



Road to ruin: Traffic congestion has become all too familiar, and unless action is taken the problem is only going to get worse. Photograph: Geraint Lewis

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THE THOROUGHbred

news

'Devious, truculent and unreliable'

Clare Garner

Heaven knows, Morrissey really does have reason to be miserable now. The Smiths' lead singer, who always held the purse strings, has been ordered by a High Court judge to dig deep into his own pocket to pay out money owed to the band's former drummer Mike Joyce.

Concluding the seven-day battle over how the profits should be shared between the group's four members, Judge John Weeks described the lead singer, Stephen Morrissey, as "devious, truculent and unreliable" and ordered the man who "held the purse strings" to pay the ex-drummer his fair share.

Morrissey and lead guitarist Johnny Marr who together wrote the group's hit songs, including "Heaven Knows I'm Miserable Now", were the dominant figures in running The Smiths' affairs. They claimed there was an agreement that they would get all the profits from publishing and 40 per cent each from other royalties. But Joyce claimed he was never told he was going to be paid only 10 per cent of record and performing royalties.

Now Morrissey and Marr must now pay Joyce his quarter-share of the profits made by the band, and must also pay legal costs, estimated at £250,000. Legal



What a judge said about the rock star Morrissey

gal experts said the extra share of the profits, plus interest dating from 1987, would mean Joyce should receive £1m.

Judge Weeks said that when Joyce applied for a mortgage, his accountant wrote to the building society stating his share of the annual income of the band was in excess of £20,000, which the accounts showed was a 25 per cent share of the profits from 1984 and 1985.

When Joyce was sent a copy of the group's accounts in July 1986, he put it in a drawer without studying it. Judge Weeks said he was satisfied that even if he had looked at the figures, he would not have realised the implications and that he was re-

ceiving a 10 per cent share.

It was only when the group dissolved in 1987 that Joyce realised what had been happening. He showed the accounts to a friend who had accountancy knowledge and he began his legal battle for an equal share.

In 1989 Andy Rourke, the group's bass guitarist who had fought a battle with heroin addiction, was "desperately short of money" and settled with Marr and Morrissey for £83,000 and 10 per cent of future record royalties, giving up all further claims.

When Marr and Morrissey eventually admitted there had been a partnership agreement in November last year, they paid

over £273,000 to Joyce as settlement of 10 per cent of The Smiths' profits.

Judge Weeks said all four had no business experience, having left school between the ages of 15 and 16 with few qualifications, but that Morrissey took all the decisions. At 23, he was four years older than the other members and more assertive and ambitious. He controlled the group's finances, he "lacked the will" to tell Rourke and Joyce of his decisions over profit sharing.

"He left it to Mr Marr to give the unpleasant news to the other two," the judge said.

Joyce said after the hearing: "I still have the highest regard for Morrissey but always knew 10 years ago when I started this action that I would win. This was never about money. It will not change my lifestyle but it will secure the future for my wife and children."

Morrissey, who was not in court for yesterday's judgment, in a statement issued through his solicitors, said: "I am disappointed and surprised at the judge's decision, particularly given the weight of the evidence against Mike Joyce's claim. I will be considering the terms of the judgment with my solicitors to assess possible grounds for appeal." Marr refused to comment and left the court building immediately.

Two guilty of embassy bombing

Two Palestinian terrorists were convicted at the Old Bailey yesterday of plotting to bomb Jewish targets in Britain in a bid to sabotage the Middle East peace process.

Jawad Botmeh and Samir Alami used their English university educations to make the high explosives for their bombing campaign. The two extremists will be sentenced on Monday. A third defendant, Mahmoud Abu-Wardeh, was cleared of taking part in the conspiracy and released on order of the judge, Mr Justice Garland.

Both Mr Botmeh and Mr Alami showed no emotion as the jury returned their verdicts after

six and a half hours of deliberations.

Mr Alami, 30, of South Kensington, central London, Mr Botmeh, a businessman, 28, of Bloomsbury, central London, and Mr Abu-Wardeh, 25, of Putney, south-west London, had all denied conspiring to cause explosions between January 1993 and May 1995. They also denied possessing an explosive substance - Triacetone Triperoxide - of a nature likely to endanger life or cause serious damage on or before 25 May 1995, and possession of firearms.

The jury was not asked to return verdicts on the possession charges against Mr Botmeh and

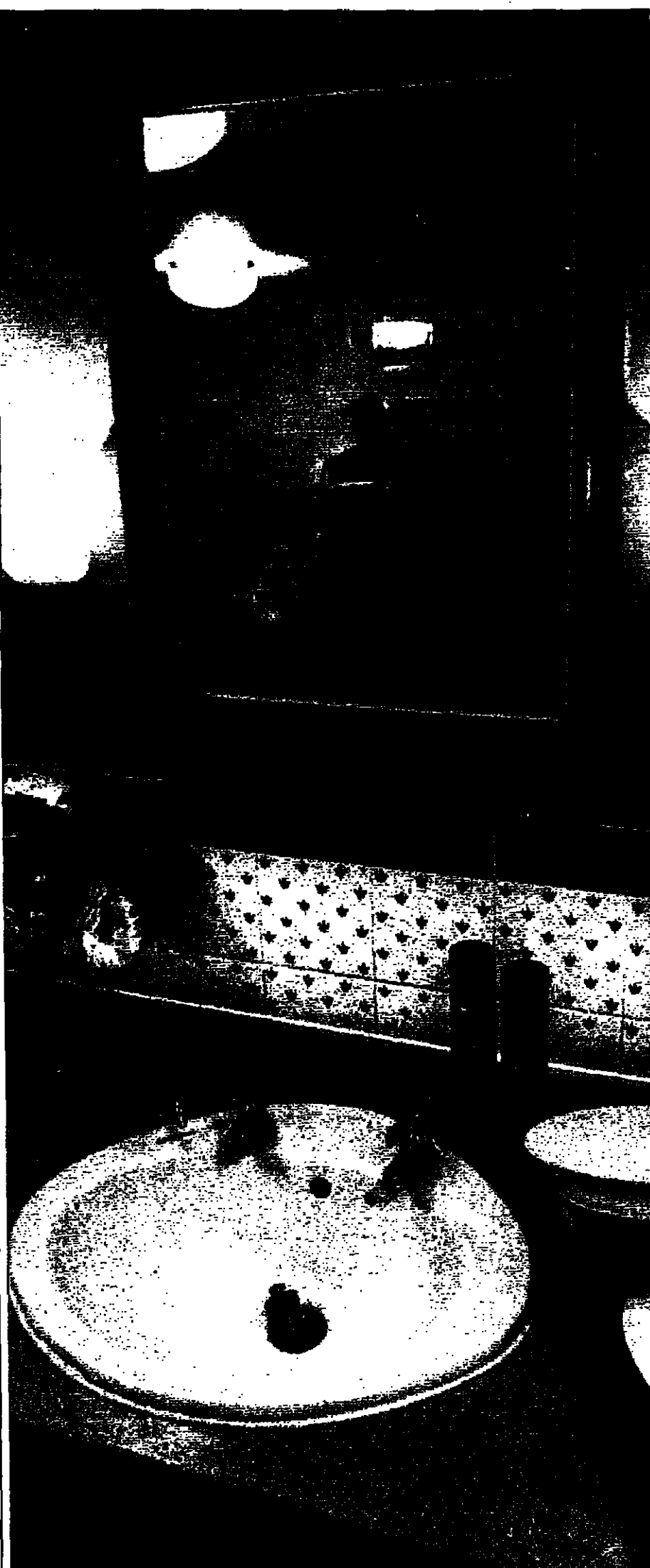
Mr Alami after they were convicted of the bombing plot. But Mr Abu-Wardeh was cleared of all the charges. Mr Abu-Wardeh nodded to the jury as they cleared him of all charges against him. He hugged his co-defendants before leaving the dock.

Two car bombs rocked the Israeli Embassy, in Kensington Gardens, west London, and a Jewish charity in north London in July 1994 - causing millions of pounds of damage. "Mercifully no one was killed or seriously injured but they were grave acts of terrorism," Mr Justice Garland said when summing up the two month trial.

Mr Botmeh and Mr Alami

were members of a Palestinian terror cell in Britain. They believed that Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat "was misguided in his attempts to come to any accommodation with Israel and wished to hinder the process", David Calvert-Smith, prosecuting, had told the court.

Earlier in the trial Mrs Nadia Zekra, a mother of two, who was originally accused of planting the bomb, was found not guilty on the orders of the judge after he described the evidence against her as suspect. Mr Justice Garland accepted a defence submission that Mrs Zekra, 49, who had denied causing the explosion, had no case to answer.



Reflected glory: Matthew Jury of HMS Victory in Portsmouth, Hampshire, making use of the facilities offered by the naval base's Historic Ships in the City enterprise, which has just won the National Public Loo of the Year award. Photograph: Russell Sach

Britain's children toiling for 10p an hour

Charlie Bain

Around 90 per cent of children living in the Midlands, the north of England and Scotland are employed illegally, new research has revealed.

Children as young as 10 are working long hours on low pay in a variety of jobs ranging from paper rounds to working in sawmills. One 12 year-old boy was discovered working as a receptionist for a mini-cab firm in Cumbria for 10p an hour.

The research was carried out by Dr Jim McKechnie of the University of Paisley, and challenges the notion that child labour is only found in Third World countries.

Speaking at the launch of a report published by the United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef), documenting the plight of young children working around the world, Dr McKechnie said that the problem of child labour in Britain had been neglected.

"People living in the developed world seem to get up on their soap boxes and preach to the underdeveloped world about the appalling child labour conditions in their countries, when in fact everything isn't so rosy in their own back garden," he said.

The main problem, he added, was that local authorities were neglecting the issue of work permits, and rarely exercised their right to fine employers who exploit children illegally.

He added that the old myth that says that poverty is the main cause of child labour is no longer true in Britain, with more middle class children doing "beneficial" work experience. The research shows that 70 per cent of children have been involved in some sort of paid employment outside the family by the age of 16, earning on average £1-£2 an hour. In the north of England and Scotland, 29 per cent of children had worked before the age of 13.

Citing a number of Dickensian examples, Dr McKechnie said that he found one "very young" boy working in a sawmill in Dumfries, Galloway, and another who suffocated last year when cleaning out a vat at a chemical factory.

Labour's overseas development spokeswoman Clare Short praised the work of Unicef, and called for politicians to recognise the plight of children: "Instead of talking about ridiculous buildings in Greenwich to celebrate the Millennium, why don't we determine to see an era where no children are malnourished, who all have primary health care," she said.

"not sure which Rewards programme is the best"

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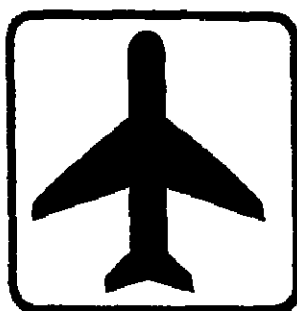
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Club doorman names Leah's ecstasy dealer

A nightclub doorman yesterday named in court the drug dealer he claimed supplied the ecstasy tablet which killed teenager Leah Betts.

Patrick O'Mahoney, head doorman at Raquel's nightclub in Basildon, Essex, at the time Leah died, claimed it was a man named Mark Murray who was now living in Spain.

But Mr O'Mahoney said he ultimately laid the blame for Leah's death at the door of the club's managers, who he said were aware dealers operated in the club and instructed doorman to let them carry on.

The jury at Norwich Crown Court was also told that security at Raquel's had been organised by Tony Tucker, who was one of three men later found shot dead in a Range Rover at Rettendon, Essex.

The court has been told the ecstasy that killed Leah was bought via a network of friends including 18-year-old Steven Packman, of Laindon, Essex, who denies being involved in the supply of the drug. A 19-year-old, Stephen Smith has admitted a similar charge.

Leah collapsed into a coma shortly after taking one of the tablets at her 18th birthday party at her parents' home in Latchingdon in November last year. She died a few days later.

Mr O'Mahoney said police had arrested and questioned Mr Murray following Leah's death. "The police are well aware about Mark Murray," he said. "I am just sick of that scumbag sitting in Spain." Mr O'Mahoney said nine people were in prison because of Mr Murray. The court was told how the

News of the World newspaper had arranged for Mr O'Mahoney to meet Mr Packman in an attempt to hear what the 18-year-old had to say about the ecstasy which killed Leah.

Mr O'Mahoney tape-recorded the conversation. And he said he realised that Mr Packman had bought the drugs from Mr Murray during the conversation. "It could only be Mark Murray really," said Mr O'Mahoney. "When he [Packman] described him I knew who he was talking about. It is probably why no one has seen Mark Murray since that day."

Mr O'Mahoney admitted that he was a criminal and had had dealings in the past with "serious criminals".

He had many convictions, including convictions and had served time in prison. But he said in the last 18 months he had changed his way of life. He said he now lived in fear of his life because he was giving evidence and had given information to police.

He told the court that security arrangements at Raquel's were managed by Tony Tucker, a known drugs dealer, who was found shot dead with two other dealers a few weeks after Leah's death. A trial is pending in connection with the killings, the jury was told.

"I feel sorry for [Mr Packman]. He is afraid of the ghost of Tony Tucker. He should just name the man he is protecting," Mr O'Mahoney said.

"I was aware as well as the management were aware and everyone else was aware what particular person was supplying ecstasy in that club."

The hearing continues today.

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£200,000 for soccer disaster brother

Life destroyed by post-traumatic stress disorder after Hillsborough

Patricia Wynn Davies
Legal Affairs Editor

A man who became psychologically ill after his half-brother was crushed to death in the 1989 Hillsborough disaster is entitled to £201,729 damages from South Yorkshire Police, a High Court judge ruled yesterday.

John McCarthy, 35, who suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder, would never work again, Mr Justice Sachs said as he awarded the sum to cover suffering and injury to health, loss of earnings and medical expenses.

Irene Glover, the brothers' mother, said afterwards: "I am happy and I'm sad. It is very emotional for us even after all these years."

Mr McCarthy, who was 28 at the time of the tragedy, had given a spare ticket for the Liverpool-Northingham Forest semi-final to his half-brother Ian Glover, 11 years his junior. Mr McCarthy sat in the north stand but Ian's ticket and that of another brother, Joe Glover, were for the Leppings Lane end of the Sheffield ground.

Mr McCarthy, who had been watching the carnage unfold in the pens, and Joe Glover, who survived the crush, identified Ian's body in a makeshift mortuary in the gymnasium.

The judge said: "I have seen the photograph of his deceased half-brother. I have seen the video of events in that gymnasium. They were utterly horrendous."

On what would have been Ian's 21st birthday Mr McCarthy attempted suicide.

As in earlier cases, the force had admitted negligently causing death and injury but claimed Mr McCarthy was too remote from the scene and did not have a close enough relationship with his half-brother.

Many relatives of the tragedy's victims have been awarded only the standard bereavement allowance. They have been unable to claim for psychological illness if they were too remote from the crushing or if their ties with the victim were not close.

But Mr Justice Sachs said Mr

McCarthy's claim was clearly different from a leading House of Lords case involving Brian Harrison and Robert Alcock, who lost two brothers and a brother-in-law respectively and whose claims were rejected.

In Mr McCarthy's case, the evidence that he was "particularly close" to his half-brother was "all one way", the judge said, and his reaction to what he saw and heard in the short time after being told of the death was "of no surprise to anybody who has seen these occurrences".

Geoffrey Glave, a former South Yorkshire policeman who was one of the officers who won damages for post-traumatic stress disorder last month, had looked after Ian Glover's body and gave evidence in yesterday's case. The scene in the gymnasium was "utter carnage", he told the court, Mr McCarthy and Joe Glover had collapsed over the body, inconsolable.

Mrs Glover watched the Jimmy McGovern Hillsborough drama last week which featured Ian and Joe. Because yesterday's case was still unresolved, some of John McCarthy's role in the actual events was incorporated into Joe's character.

Lawyers for South Yorkshire police said yesterday that an appeal was being considered. The judge said he was well aware that the House of Lords had urged limitations on such claims but insisted: "My decision creates no precedent. I decide it on the facts and I am satisfied ... that the plaintiff passes the tests entitling him to be compensated."

He added: "Whilst there is nothing I can really do to compensate the Glover and the McCarthy families for the loss of Ian, I do hope that if this is to be conclusion of the litigation it will bring to them all, if not peace of mind, at least a lowering of the anxiety and hurt they feel."

Mrs Glover welcomed calls for the inquest into the 96 deaths to be reopened or for a fresh inquiry to be held into the new evidence disclosed in the film.

Salad days return to Gillingham FC (but not in the way you might think)



Vegetable fetish: Fans brandishing bunches of celery outside Gillingham Town's ground in Kent as the ritual spreads through the club

Photograph: Bill Graham/KNP

David Lister

In a gift to stand-up comedians everywhere, Gillingham football club has declared celery an offensive weapon.

Soccer fans in the Kent town have been turning up to matches with celery hidden in their trousers. The assumption that this would not be noticed by police demonstrates an egotism not often found in the league second division.

Equally, the decision by club stewards to frisk fans for celery indicates a commendable devotion to duty.

Curiously, the fans have been using the celery not to attack opposing fans or even opposing players, but their own goalkeeper. Jim Stannard, at 16st 6lb one of football's chunkier athletes, has been bombarded by his own supporters at every home game. This is preceded by a chant known as the Celery Song, with a chorus of the one word CELERY sung to the well-known soccer chorus WEMMERLEY. The verse is better not described at all.

Gillingham Town's directors have now decided that a fortnightly bombardment of their own goalkeeper is not in the best interests of the club. This view appeared to have some logic when the Gillingham players with a chorus of CELERY ringing in their ears lost at home to Cardiff this week in the first round of the Auto Windscreens Shield trophy. Only 1,193 fans were present, but local green grocers still did a roaring trade.

The club's programme editor, Matt Davison, said with pride yesterday: "Our keeper is the heaviest player in the league. A lot of celery was thrown and inevitably some of it went in his direction. But it's been something to identify the club with. We're the only club to have a connection with a vegetable."

Gillingham is the first club to ban celery, but the link between the vegetable and football started at the more upmarket Chelsea in the Eighties. After club vice-chairman, Matthew Harding, was killed in a helicopter crash last October, a bunch of celery was placed among the floral tributes at the ground.

Sticking points: Five facts about celery

1. A diet of nothing but celery would be fatal. It takes more energy to eat it than it gives you.
2. The Romans ate celery to deepen the voice for public speaking.
3. Model Marie Helvin gave up cigarettes by munching celery.
4. Celery was introduced to Britain from Italy in the 17th century. In Italy today, the opera singer Luciano Pavarotti insists on one celery stick in his favourite pasta.
5. Gardener Bernard Lavery achieved a world record with a 45lb celery head. He claimed to make it grow by "talking to it nicely."

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THERE'S A GREAT DEAL GOING ON THIS CHRISTMAS



"What is the use in having lived so long, if at the end you don't know what you know?" In what she expects to be her last major piece of published writing, Martha Gellhorn looks back on an extraordinary life

A former traveller, living on benefits, squatting, begging, addicted to heroin... Carl (right) is an anti-hero for our times. But, discovers Andy Beckett, this 27-year-old drifter is also a rather ordinary human being, whose aspirations confound our prejudices



"One of the most wonderful chapters in the whole history of art..." David Sylvester reflects on Picasso, Braque, and the creative fruits of their relationship

Plus: the sixth annual Independent on Sunday arts awards

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news

Illness forces Fiennes to quit polar expedition

Michael Streeter

The adventurer Sir Ranulph Fiennes was forced to abandon an attempt to become the first person to walk alone and unsupported across the Antarctic yesterday when he was laid low by kidney stones.

After 48 hours of constant pain, Fiennes sent up two distress flares to show he could not continue his 1,800-mile, 110-day trek to the South Pole.

As a rescue plane was moving to locate the explorer, his wife Lady Fiennes said the news was bitterly disappointing. "This was the last thing we expected to happen. He has had kidney stones before and was therefore taking medication to prevent them."

"The maddening thing is that once the stones come out he will be okay again - he is very fit."

The distress flares were spotted by his back-up team earlier yesterday. He was nearly a quarter of the way into the ex-

pedition and had otherwise been making good progress.

Dr Mike Stroud, the expedition's medical adviser who failed in an earlier attempt to complete the feat along with Fiennes in 1992, said he was "very, very disappointed" for the explorer. "He's been working hard for quite a long time and to end up like this is the worst possible outcome."

Dr Stroud told ITN that kidney stones could be extremely debilitating. "It's meant to be the worst pain you can get and it makes you feel very sick and ill and alone in a tent and out in Antarctica, it must have been miserable."

Fiennes was hoping that his mission would raise £1m for the breast cancer charity Breakthrough.

He was competing against international explorers who set off at a similar time and was trailing slightly behind his main rival, Norwegian Borge Ousland, who is 20 years his junior.



A dog has its day: Johnny Morris, the presenter of *Animal Magic*, with one of four dogs who were guests of the National Canine Defence League at a tea party at Canary Wharf, east London, yesterday, to encourage animal lovers to 'Sponsor a Dog' - and save its life - this Christmas for £1 a week or more. Photograph: Edward Sykes

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Bad sports that turn out losers

Liz Hunt
Health Editor

The long-held belief that "sport builds character" has been turned on its head by a new study which concludes that some sports appear to foster delinquent behaviour in teenagers.

Non-team pursuits - such as tennis, wind-surfing, aerobics and athletics - were found to be associated with bad behaviour. Boys who took part in a lot of non-team sports at 15 were almost twice as likely to indulge in car theft, burglary, shoplifting, and fighting with a weapon by the time they were 18 as boys who did little or no sports, according to the study.

For girls, the figure was even higher and they were almost three times as likely to be involved in deviant behaviour by 18 as their non-sporting peers. Girls who played "moderate" as opposed to high amounts of sport were twice as likely to be delinquent.

While some participants in team activities - most notably

rugby players - are notorious for their post-match pack behaviour, the researchers from the United States and New Zealand say that games such as rugby, cricket, hockey and netball were not associated with increased delinquency among individuals.

Writing in today's issue of the *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, Dr Dorothy Begg, of Otago Medical School in Dunedin, New Zealand, and colleagues

part of most societies since the time of the ancient Greeks who believed that it was an alternative to war for channelling "young people's aggressive-ness". In the mid-19th century it was a form of social control in public schools, and was viewed as a substitute for the poaching, vandalism, bullying and drunkenness which had been the preferred choices of boys with too much leisure.

Are games good for the nation, or do they breed delinquents?

say: "Conventional sports which incorporate many aspects of the broader society (for example, rules, regulations, authority figures) may appeal to the non-delinquent, but for the delinquent, who by definition 'violates the rules and norms of society', such activities offer little appeal."

Sport has been an integral

Over time, the hypothesis that sport is a deterrent - that involvement in such activities exposes young people to strong conforming influences rather than deviant ones - has become accepted. The Prime Minister, himself an ardent cricket fan, has made clear his belief in the role of sport in establishing a feel-good factor at a national

and local level. Earlier this year, John Major committed millions of pounds of National Lottery money to improving sporting facilities and increasing participation by everyone from career athlete to weekend enthusiast and schoolchild.

However, the authors of the new study say that there is an alternative view, the "athletic delinquent" hypothesis which is less popular. This holds that deviant behaviour is a product of an individual's membership of or contact with organisations. A team sport could, in theory, expose a child to older delinquents, while behaviour such as cheating in athletics can actually be learned by participants.

Dr Begg concludes that the study's findings do not support the view that sport is a panacea for delinquent behaviour, but "if anything, it may exacerbate the problem". She says that activities should be tailored to the individual, and that more challenging Outward Bound activities may be more suitable for unconventional characters.

Surgery cancelled in cash crisis

Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

Patients are having operations cancelled by hospitals facing a cash crisis this winter, in spite of the additional £1.6bn won for the health service by Stephen Dorrell, the Secretary of State for Health.

General practitioners in South London are being told by their local Lewisham hospital trust to halt all non-urgent referrals to the hospital until next April, when the extra money becomes available with the new financial year. GPs in East London similarly have been told by their hospital trust to delay all non-urgent cases until then.

Chris Smith, Labour's spokesman for Health, said a similar picture was emerging in other parts of the country. "Wherever

I go," he said, "I hear reports of hospitals in cash shortage. The pressure of emergency cases will intensify the difficulties facing hospitals, with the inevitable consequences of delayed operations and lengthening waiting lists," he said.

Doctors in South London are being told in a letter from the Lewisham Hospital NHS Trust, which *The Independent* has obtained, that the hospital is being forced to cancel all non-urgent elective surgery because of the shortage of funds. The squeeze has been increased by a rise of 12 per cent in emergency admissions.

Many patients will be "disappointed and upset", Val Martin, chief executive of the hospital, warned in the letter to Jim Dowd, the Labour MP for Lewisham West. "I very much

regret the action that we are forced to take and I know our clinical teams will be as sensitive as they can to make sure all appropriate clinical cases are still brought in," she added, "until the 31st March 1997, we will reluctantly only be able to treat urgent cases and those who would otherwise exceed the 18-months waiting-time target."

Mr Dowd is protesting to Mr Dorrell over the delays, but ministerial sources indicated there would be no further injection of cash this year to help the hospitals over to the next financial year.

Mr Dorrell, in effect, admitted there was a problem by allocating £20m to a "challenge fund" for hospitals to make bids by the end of the month for the money to allow more elderly people to be treated at home,

freeing up beds. Hospitals will have to make ends meet by a combination of accountancy tricks, demanding earlier payment of bills by fundholding GPs, and they may delay paying their own bills, although that would be against government policy. Health authorities may also borrow money from each other, under a "brokerage" system.

Government figures show that ten NHS trusts remained in real deficit in 1995-6, ranging from Mid Anglia Community at £119,000, to United Leeds Teaching hospitals at £6.9m.

Mr Dorrell has predicted there will be a net surplus for the trusts of £60m, but that could hide big deficits for some trusts, who have a statutory duty to break even at the end of the year.

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The drawing from hell that helps to heal the trauma

Glenda Cooper on how children can come to terms with abuse through art

Scattered on the floor, the drawings are graphic, shocking and angry. They are also an essential way for Susan to come to terms with the abuse she suffered throughout her childhood.

Susan (not her real name) is one of the hundreds of people that the NSPCC Therapeutic Centre for the Child in Warrington has helped by using art therapy. As well as victims of sexual abuse, they have also reached out to those affected by the IRA bomb in Warrington in March 1993 and those who have suffered bereavement.

Since May 1993, the project has treated more than 300 people of which around 15 per cent of people have been adults. Over a three- to six-month period, people's changes have been "highly effective" for nearly eight out of 10 people. The children, mainly between the ages of eight and 14, attend six sessions, after which there is a review.

Using art has been seen as a powerful way to help such young children. "Children are often abused in the pre-verbal stage," said Jim Walters, the co-ordinator. "Nearly all survivors of sexual abuse are abused before the age of eight - prior to the development of logical thinking and rationality, so image-making is very important for them."

Susan was abused from an early age by a close relative and was gang-raped at the age of 14. When she first came to the project years later, she was "a quivering wreck".

"She had never been heard before," said Betty Edwards, a team member. "She had been blaming herself for the abuse and turning to self-harm. A lot of women think that the abuse is their fault."

Susan's paintings show her feelings about this - one showing the bluebell wood where she was repeatedly raped, the other her bedroom where she used to lie and gaze

out of the window at the stars and birds in the tree while the abuse went on. "They represented a means of escape," said Mr Walters. "It was a way of disassociating herself from what was going on."

But by letting go of her feelings through art, Susan changed dramatically. "By finishing a piece of work

she can let go of their victimisation," said Mr Walters. "It is an empowering aspect of the art. It shows the possibility of telling their story."

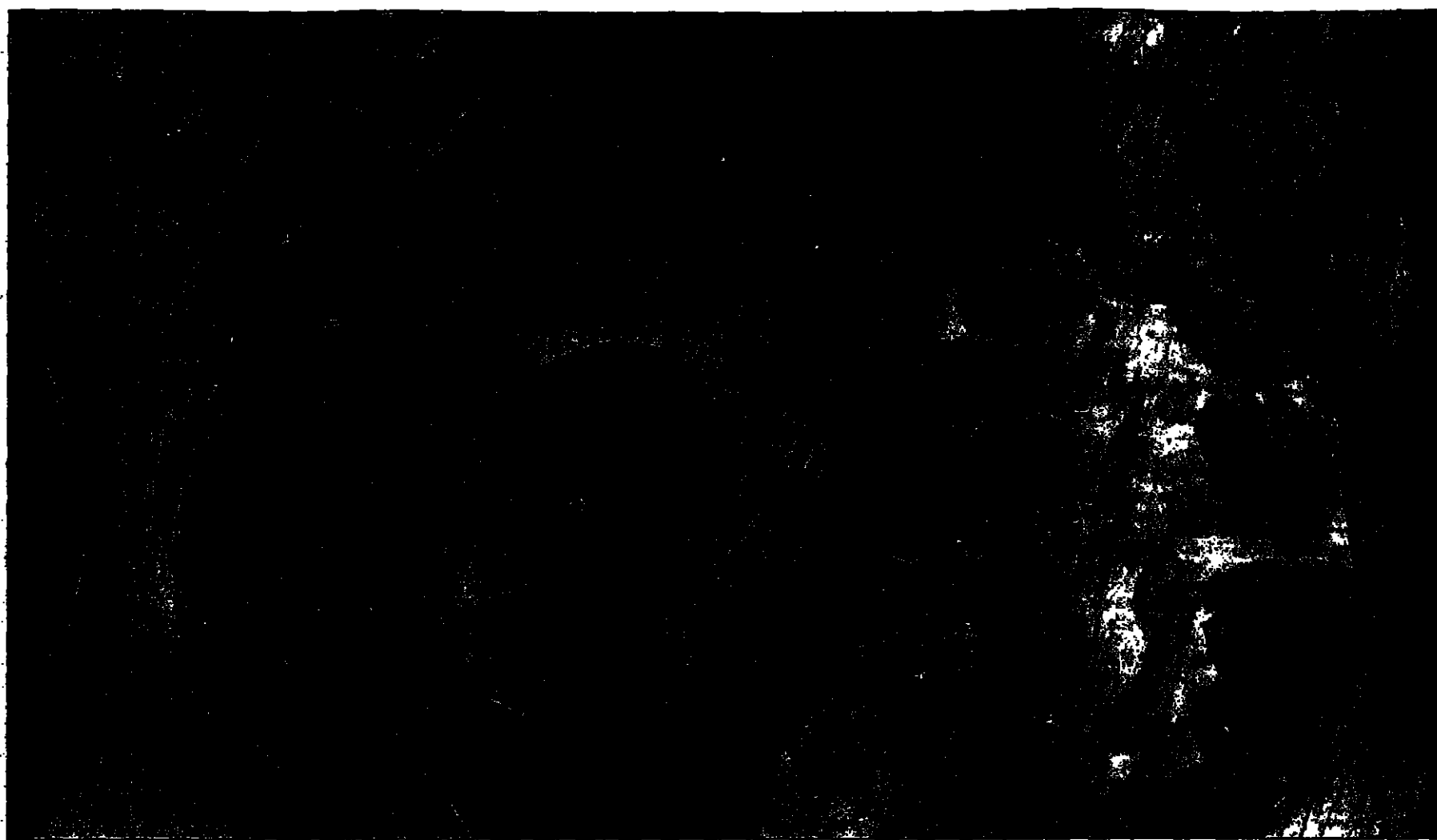
It is not just victims of sexual abuse whom the project helps. It has also worked with bereaved children and was used after the Warrington bomb which left Tim Parry and Johnathan

Ball dead. Children who were close to the families felt terrific grief.

"One child hadn't gone into town that day and someone he knew was seriously injured. He felt that 'it should have been me'," said Mr Walters. "We had to work with image-making as part of the process, to allow him to let go of the shame."

As well as individual therapy, the project also runs three-day intensive courses for groups, where various exercises are undertaken. In one case, survivors are asked to visualise a room with their name on and draw what is inside. Often the results are frightening. One woman drew her family and herself separate with a

huge painted black line around it symbolising her family's inability to accept the fact she had been abused. The group - usually seven or eight people - will then explain the drawings, often a very emotional experience. "It is like coming out of hiding," said Mr Walters. "The art is a great mediator."



Escape route: Painting by Susan, who attended the NSPCC centre in Warrington. It shows her in the bluebell wood where her stepfather (left) repeatedly raped her

THE INDEPENDENT/NSPCC Victims of Abuse Appeal



National inquiry into abuse urged

Roger Dobson

The MP David Alton yesterday called for a national inquiry into abuse in children's homes following the launch of a third big police inquiry.

Police in Merseyside have joined officials in Cheshire and north Wales in investigating abuse in children's homes, with smaller inquiries under way elsewhere. All relate to allegations of widespread abuse in the Seventies and Eighties.

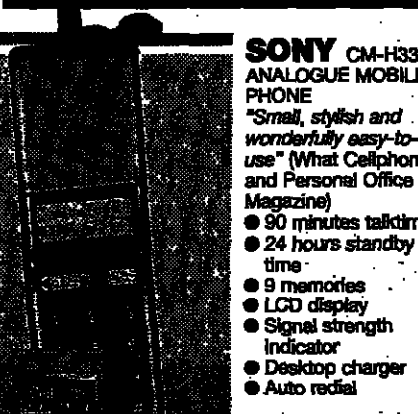
Mr Alton, Liberal Democrat member for Mossley Hill in Liverpool, who will chair a meeting between MPs and the families of abused children next week, said the calls for a full inquiry were becoming irresistible.

"I think that the case which has been argued for wider royal commission or judicial inquiry is a good one," he said. "I cannot think of an issue which cries out more for a thorough judicial inquiry than this."

"It seems to be the case that children's homes can act like a honeypot for people with a particular disposition and the networking thing seems secondary to that. Clearly there needs to be a rigour that you don't have to have in any other occupation and that seems to have been what has been missing."

Parents of abuse victims in the North-west have invited 40 MPs to a meeting in the Commons next week to hear their case for a royal commission.

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Students getting worse, dons say

Judith Judd
Education Editor

Most academics believe the standard of undergraduates arriving at university has fallen over the last 10 years, according to a survey commissioned by *The Independent*.

The findings will offer ammunition to traditionalists who say that school and examination standards are leaving even the brightest pupils badly prepared for university.

Nearly one-fifth of those questioned also felt that they were under pressure to give students good grades in examinations because of the need to compete with other universities in the market place. The drop in standards has been particularly dramatic in mathematics, where eight out of ten lecturers think that freshers are less well-prepared than they were.

Overall, 59 per cent think that the standard is down while just 10 per cent think they have stayed the same, says the survey by Continental Research which questioned 302 professors and lecturers in 50 universities.

English dons are the least worried about standards. One-third think that they have improved and just over one-third think they are worse.

Science and engineering academics, however, are only slightly less gloomy than their colleagues in mathematics. In languages, six out of ten think there has been a fall.

Most dons were cautious about the way in which the government policy of rewarding universities which attract the most students had affected marking in degree examina-

tions. Only 6 per cent said they agreed strongly that they were under pressure to give students good grades though a further 13 per cent said they slightly agreed. However, two-thirds said that they strongly disagreed. Again, dons in mathematics felt under more pressure than their colleagues in other subjects.

Nearly three-quarters of those questioned thought that the quality of university education had declined markedly because of spending cuts. The worst effect, they said, had been increasing class sizes and less contact with individual students.

Fewer than one-third backed a national scheme for student loans for tuition fees to be repaid through national insurance, unlike university vice-chancellors who supported such a scheme. At present, students loans are available only for living costs.

They were even more opposed to individual universities charging top-up tuition fees. Several universities had said that they would consider top-ups after last year's budget cuts.

Vice-chancellors have welcomed the relief offered in last month's budget announcement and urged universities not to charge extra fees. But governors at the London School of Economics will tonight decide whether or not to charge top-up fees.

Six out of ten academics questioned wanted taxes to be increased to pay for the growing numbers of students going to university.

Education +, *The Tabloid*: Academe under stress

Plan for helicopter day-trips over island's most rugged ridge alarms climbers and conservationists



Away from it all: Climbers nearing the summit of Bidean Duinn namh Ramh on the precipitous Cuillin ridge of Skye.

Photograph: Gordon Stanforth

Skye distress at threat from the skies

Stephen Goodwin
Heritage Correspondent

A proposal to run £30-a-head helicopter rides over the Cuillin ridge on the Isle of Skye, the most rugged mountain landscape in Britain, has alarmed climbers and conservationists.

The "antlered Cuillin", as the island poet Sorley Maclean so accurately described them, rise directly from the sea to form a chain of peaks over 3,000ft. The precipitous ridge and wild corries are the preserve of climbers, walkers and golden eagles.

But the sense of wilderness in what is a relatively small area of the Highlands - it can be traversed on

foot in a day - is threatened by a proposal from a London-based firm to run tourist helicopter rides. Skye Helicopters, a subsidiary of MFH Helicopters Ltd, wants to station two four-seater Robinson R44s at Sligachan, the nearest point to the range on the island's main road. At peak times in the spring and summer there would be 10-minute flights at £30 a seat.

Tomorrow is the deadline for objections to the company's planning application for three helipads - a concrete strip 50m by 25m - a cabin and lavatories on land owned by the Sligachan Hotel.

Although word of the scheme was slow to filter out, scores of objections are piling up at the

planning office in Portree, the island's main town. The Mountaineering Council of Scotland has received copies of at least 30.

"The main fear is the loss of the feeling of being in a wild landscape," Mike Dales, the council's access and conservation officer, said. "That's the main reason people go to Skye and it is an intangible but important part of the Skye economy."

Sir Chris Bonington, president of the Alpine Club, said Skye would be damaging its most precious resource. "The combination of noise and visual pollution is appalling."

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and Scottish Natural Heritage are concerned about the effect on rare bird

populations, particularly the golden eagle.

MFH insists that the helicopters would not be intrusive and that the scheme would only go ahead if it won local backing. Edward Wood, a director of MFH, said four seasonal jobs would be created and the helicopters could assist in mountain rescues.

"It would appear from our research that there is a large number of people who may not be super-fit but would like to see the Cuillin range," Mr Wood said. "Only a small proportion of time would be spent over the northern Cuillin and one can adjust flight patterns ... so there is minimal intrusion for climbers."

Local opinion is divided. The

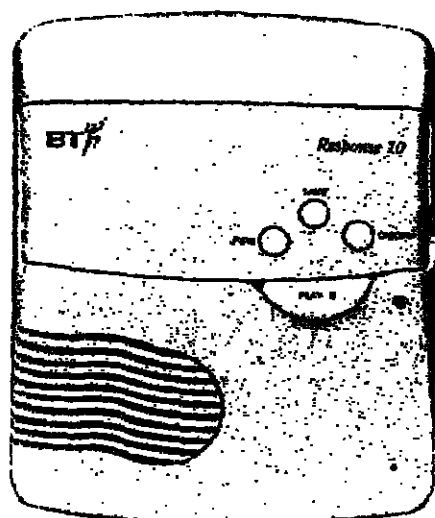
majority in Sevens, three miles from Sligachan, are content for the flights to go ahead. "Four jobs are important to an area where employment is always a bit sticky," Neil Maclean, the town clerk, said.

But Sandy Coghill and his family, Sligachan's only residents apart from the hotel, are opposed. Mr Coghill owns a campsite used by climbers and walkers and fears the flights will alienate traditional visitors.

Paddy O'Neill, president of the Fell and Rock Club, who proposed to his wife, Janet, 23 years ago by Loch Coruisk in the shadow of the Cuillin, also objects. "Imagine having to shout over the sound of a helicopter where there should be just the sighing of the wind."

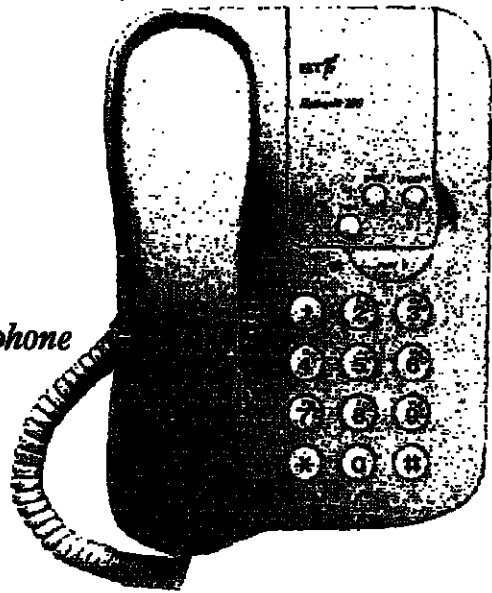
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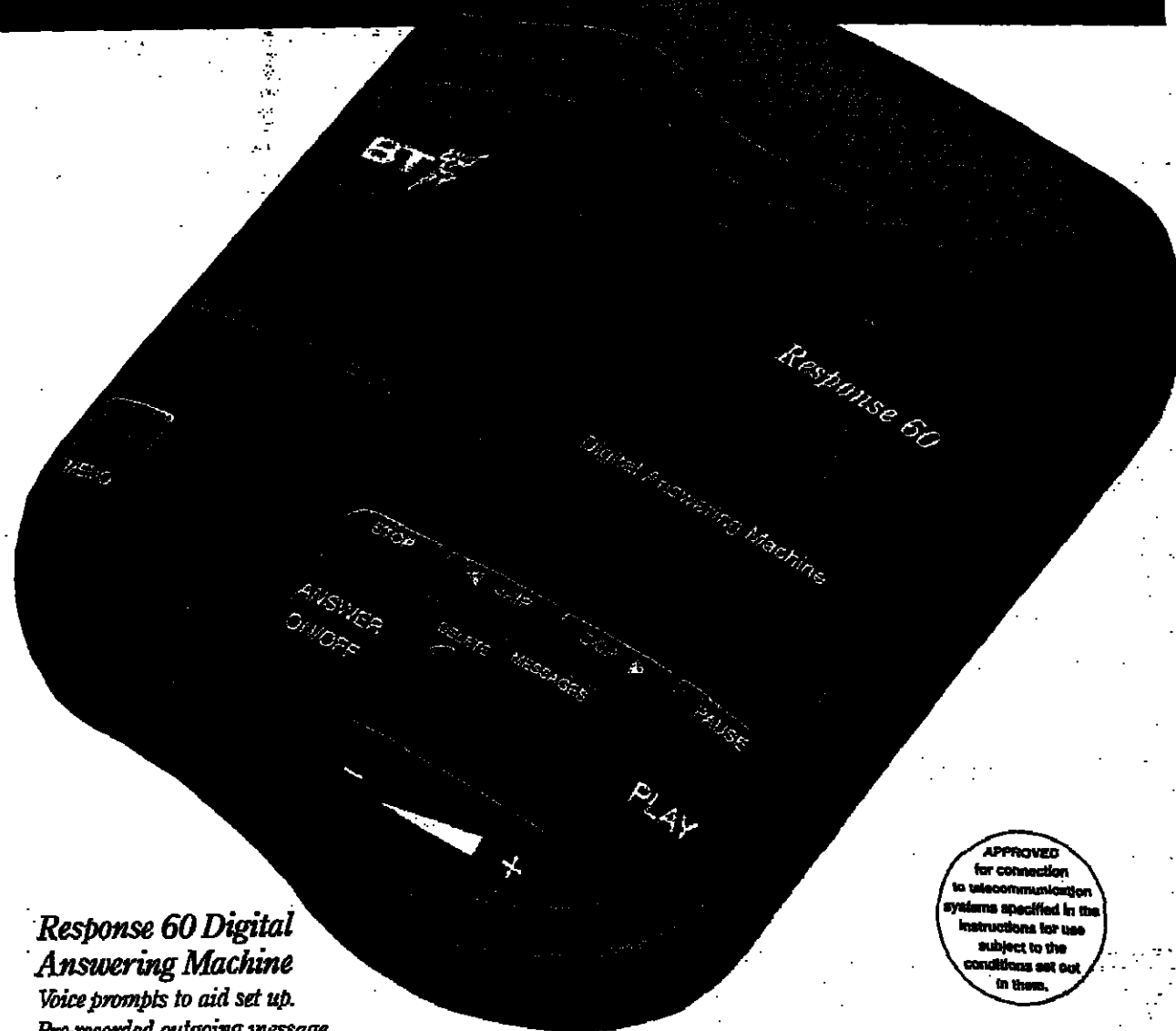


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Post-euro plans may leave Britain out in rain



Taking shelter: Spanish civil-service workers stand under a sea of umbrellas during a protest against a salary freeze aimed at enabling Spain to meet the economic criteria to join the European single currency. Photograph: AFP

New plans to form a powerful body to run European economic policy after the launch of the single currency are to be discussed when European Union leaders meet in Dublin this weekend.

New Franco-German ideas for such a body are already causing intense anxiety in the Treasury. If Britain does not join the single currency, the Government would be excluded from the new club, which will have wide-ranging powers to set economic policy for the euro-zone.

Although no formal proposals are likely to be set out at Dublin, discussions on a joint letter setting out the idea were underway in Paris and Bonn this week. The moves by France and Germany to develop their plans will fuel fears among British pro-Europeans that if Britain does not join the single currency it will be left on the sidelines.

New ideas will also be proposed in Dublin to extend the so-called "stability pact", the controversial system of rules for running the euro-zone, which is currently under discussion, into

Franco-German ideas for EMU have sparked an attack of Treasury jitters. Sarah Helm reports from Brussels

a "stability-and-growth pact". The intention is to reassure the public that the single currency means growth and jobs, as well as strict economic discipline.

The proposals from France and Germany are the latest indication of the serious preparation which is underway for the launch of the euro. Outstanding differences between France and Germany over how the single currency's rules and sanctions should be applied are still not settled. However, sources in Paris and Bonn last night expected that the dispute would be solved at a meeting of European finance ministers today, ahead of the full summit.

Once the stability-pact rules have been finalised, attention will switch to the more sensitive question of how economic policy will be agreed and what body should enforce stability rules. It

is largely agreed in Bonn and Paris that decisions on enforcement of the stability pact would be taken by European finance ministers, as set out under the Maastricht treaty.

However, the more radical plan is to establish an informal policy-making body, which would meet separately from the finance ministers, and would agree in advance how the stability pact should be enforced. The new club would also discuss exchange-rate policy for the euro-zone and other crucial aspects of economic policy. It would constitute an inner circle, from which Britain would be excluded if it chose not to join the single currency.

The idea of creating an informal political group, which would probably consist of heads of government from countries inside the single currency, has al-

ready been floated by Jean Arthuis, the French finance minister. He discussed the idea with Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, during the Anglo-French summit last month, when Mr Clarke voiced strong opposition.

The plans, which are carefully guarded, are sensitive for all countries who may be left out of monetary union in the first phase. Should a body be established for "in" countries only, suspicion will grow of a new "hard-core" Europe. The European Commission is also strongly opposed to the setting up of such a body which would be outside the rules of the Maastricht treaty. But France has long argued that Europe's economic policy must not be left solely in the hands of the future European Central Bank, but must be given a political counter-weight.

Any disagreements apart, the European finance ministers are determined to use the Dublin summit to proclaim the success of the stability negotiations. The pact is widely viewed as the foundation stone for monetary union.

Israel plans 'time-bomb' settlement

Patrick Cockburn
Jerusalem

In the next few months Israeli bulldozers may start clearing land for a Jewish settlement in the heart of Palestinian East Jerusalem. The project is financed by an American multi-millionaire, Irving Moskowitz, who says he wants "to do everything I possibly can to help reclaim Jerusalem for the Jewish people".

Permission to go ahead with the plan to build 132 houses for Jews in the Ras al-Amud district where 11,000 Palestinians live below the Mount of Olives came at a meeting of the Jerusalem Planning Board, where objectors say the officials refused to translate from Hebrew to Arabic.

Yasser Arafat, the Palestinian leader, said yesterday in Gaza that the decision to go

ahead with the project was contrary to the Oslo accords under which the future of Jerusalem is to be settled. "This is a very serious breach of what has been agreed upon," he said.

A more immediate problem faces Ali Hamdullah, 41, and his two brothers who live, with their families, in a large white house on one corner of the 3.5 acres where Dr Moskowitz, who lives in Miami, wants to build his settlement.

"We have lived here since 1952 and I was born here," said Mr Hamdullah, a truck driver, waving an eviction notice from Dr Moskowitz's lawyer. He says that over the past 10 years Jerusalem municipality has used the site, which used to be covered in olive trees, as a rubbish dump. A few trees still protrude from the rubble. Mr Hamdullah said: "We tried to stop them dumping rubbish... by parking a lorry at the en-

trance, but the police told us to move it." He adds that the municipality refused to connect the house to the sewage system. None of this is likely to move Dr Moskowitz, who made his fortune through private hospitals and a bingo parlour. In the past he has given \$2.3m (£1.5m) to Ateret Cohanim - "Crown of the Priests" - a settler organisation which has already established 600 Jews in the Muslim quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem. He is closely allied to the right-wing government of Benjamin Netanyahu.

Danny Seidemann, a lawyer for Ir Shalem, a peace group opposed to Jewish settlement in Palestinian districts of Jerusalem, said: "The attempt by Dr Moskowitz, backed by Jerusalem Municipality and by the Minister of the Interior, Mr Eli Shuss, will undoubtedly create a major political problem, similar to that which followed the opening of the tunnel in [the] Old City in September." On that occasion 60 Palestinians and 15 Israelis were killed.

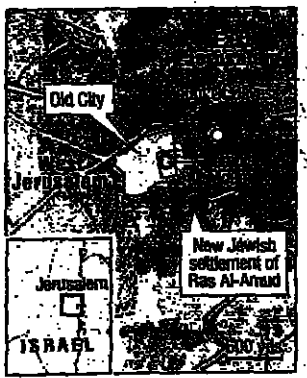
To force through the plan for the 132 houses for Jews in Ras al-Amud, Mr Shuss, who as former head of the Jerusalem Planning Committee supported the Moskowitz project, has said that a Palestinian plan to build 560 houses in the district will be conditional on the creation of the new Jewish neighbourhood.

But Naela Karsin, a local resident, said: "This is discrimination against us. We are grossly overcrowded... We don't want a settlement here as in Hebron."

Mr Shuss, a member of the religious party, Shas, shows no sign of relenting. "The Jews will build and the Arabs will build," he told Israel radio. "Everything will fall into place smoothly."

Faisal Hussein, the Palestinian leader in Jerusalem, says that he believes that, on the contrary, Dr Moskowitz's plan is a "time-bomb".

Mr Jerusalem (Reuters) - One Israeli was killed and three wounded in a drive-by shooting near the West Bank FLO-ruled town of Ramallah yesterday, Israeli emergency services said. Security sources said an Israeli car was fired on by a car bearing number plates issued to Palestinians in the West Bank.



ahead with the project was contrary to the Oslo accords under which the future of Jerusalem is to be settled. "This is a very serious breach of what has been agreed upon," he said. A more immediate problem faces Ali Hamdullah, 41, and his two brothers who live, with their families, in a large white house on one corner of the 3.5 acres where Dr Moskowitz, who lives in Miami, wants to build his settlement. "We have lived here since 1952 and I was born here," said Mr Hamdullah, a truck driver, waving an eviction notice from Dr Moskowitz's lawyer. He says that over the past 10 years Jerusalem municipality has used the site, which used to be covered in olive trees, as a rubbish dump. A few trees still protrude from the rubble. Mr Hamdullah said: "We tried to stop them dumping rubbish... by parking a lorry at the en-

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Christopher Bellamy reports on new revelations about US role in Central America

CIA 'was embroiled' in Contra drug fund

The CIA actively encouraged drug-trafficking in order to fund right-wing Contra rebels in Nicaragua during the 1980s, and a CIA agent in Nicaragua was employed to ensure the money went to the Contras and not into the pockets of drug barons, according to an investigation for ITV's *The Big Story* screened tonight.

It has previously been alleged that the US Central Intelligence Agency turned a blind eye to the drug traffic, and that this fuelled the crack epidemic in Los Angeles in the early 1980s, but the television investigation claims that its role was more active. The aircraft which brought weapons to the Contras took cocaine back to the US, while the CIA ensured that the profits went to the Contras, whom they were supporting against the Marxist Sandinista government.

The source of the allegations is a former pilot in the pre-Sandinista Nicaraguan Air Force, Carlos Cabezas. He was a strong supporter of the US-backed dictator, Anastasio Somoza, overthrown by the Sand-

nistas in 1979. Mr Cabezas was arrested in the US in 1983 after frogmen were captured smuggling drugs in San Francisco bay and spent six years in a US prison before returning to Nicaragua. He told the programme he had smuggled cocaine from Central America to San Francisco and taken the drug profits to the Miami headquarters of Contra leader, Adolfo Calero, and to Contra troops in Costa Rica.

He also said he had met a CIA agent, Ivan Gomez, in Costa Rica who, he said, was there to make sure that all the profits went to the Contras and not into the back pockets of the drug dealers and smugglers.

"They told me who he was and the reason he was there," Mr Cabezas says in the programme. "It was to make sure the money was given to the right people and nobody was taking, you know... profit they weren't supposed to."

Although a trained pilot, Mr Cabezas' role was to carry drugs from Costa Rica to the US on board commercial flights, and



Dirty war: A new investigation suggests CIA agent ensured Contra rebels in Nicaragua, not drugs barons, received cash

money from the US back again. The programme's producer at 2020 TV, Mark Rubens, said Mr Cabezas had spent a long time justifying his actions as essential to the Contra cause.

The programme approached Duane Claridge, a senior CIA officer in Washington, who planned and commanded the Contra war. He denied the CIA had ever dealt with drug-runners and said the operation was entirely funded by the US government. But in 1991 he was

indicted for perjury, accused of lying to a Congressional investigation into the war. Mr Claridge denied he had ever heard of Mr Cabezas or Mr Gomez.

The link between drugs and funding for the Contras was first highlighted in the *San Jose Mercury* in August. As part of the Contra supply operation in the early to mid-1980s, San Salvador air force planes would fly to Colombia, load up with cocaine and land at a US Air Force base in Texas. Dealers would fly

the money out of the US on commercial aircraft bound for Costa Rica and Honduras. In the late 1980s, Colombian cocaine was flown aboard private planes into small airfields in northern Costa Rica and southern Nicaragua.

The programme also interviewed Celerino Castillo, an officer in the US Drug Enforcement Administration working in El Salvador. He was asked to investigate suspicious activities at the Hopango air base in El Sal-

vador. Two hangars were operated by the CIA, he said, and the programme obtained copies of flight plans and names of individuals flying money and drugs between the US and central America.

He said: "I was there. I saw it and sent it up to Washington. And it went into what we call the 'black hole'. I was told my career in the DEA would be shortened if I continued to write about Contras being involved in narcotics-trafficking."

Clinton aims for middle of the road

Rupert Cornwell
Washington

Burned by experience and facing the continuing reality of a Republican-controlled Congress, President Bill Clinton yesterday sent the strongest of messages that he intends to continue the centrist policies which won him the White House in 1992, and which propelled him to a remarkable comeback in 1996.

Four years ago, Mr Clinton was elected as a "New Democrat", breaking with the big government orthodoxy that had lost his party each of the three previous elections. Yesterday he delivered his most important speech between re-election and next month's inauguration at the symbolic site of the Democratic Leadership Council, the moderate pressure group he once led and whose advocacy of more-discriminating government was the ideological launch pad of his first presidential bid.

Mr Clinton's hands are tied. With entrenched Republican majorities in both houses of Congress, compromise and "bipartisanship" are Washington's watchwords as he embarks on a second term. The centrist slant is already showing up in the second-term Cabinet: not only with the appointment of the outgoing Republican Senator William Cohen as Defense Secretary, and the nomination of the hawkish Madeleine Albright to the State Department, but in the jockeying for half a dozen domestic posts, too.

Pressure from black people, minorities and women's groups for top jobs, so conspicuous in the 1992 transition, is almost entirely absent this time. Those favoured include William Daley, brother of Richard Daley, mayor of Chicago, and Congressman Bill Richardson of New Mexico, a Democrat who worked with President George Bush to support the NAFTA trade agreement.

In what would be a truly stunning move, Mr Clinton has also considered replacing the Attorney General, Janet Reno with William Weld, the highly popular Republican Governor of Massachusetts. Any one of these would reinforce the centrist, pragmatic message the President delivered yesterday.

The personnel olive-branches have already been welcomed by Republicans. But it is in policy that the new bipartisanship will be truly measured. Mr Clinton's embrace of the Republican proposal to balance the budget by 2002 was his most spectacular single step to the centre in the 1996 campaign.

The shortfall itself, at \$107bn in fiscal 1996, is the smallest in a generation, while the gap between Republican and Democratic plans is eminently bridgeable. Still smarting however from Mr Clinton's campaign accusations that they were seeking to kill the programmes, Republicans insist he makes the first move on such explosive terrain. "Either they walk in lockstep, or nothing will happen," one analyst says.

France and US lock horns over next UN chief

David Usborne
New York

The game-plan of France was the single focus of attention at the UN yesterday as members of the Security Council sought to navigate through the maze of diplomatic bluffs, double-bluffs and triple-bluffs in the game of identifying the next UN Secretary General.

Further rounds of secret voting in the council yesterday confirmed Kofi

Annan, the Under-Secretary General for Peacekeeping from Ghana, as the front-runner to replace Boutros Boutros-Ghali whose term expires at the end of December. Critically, however, the straw-poll voting once more showed opposition to Mr Annan from one of the council's permanent five - widely assumed to be France.

France has been a supporter of a second term for Mr Boutros-Ghali, whose candidature was vetoed by the United States three weeks ago. Most ob-

servers believe France is responding to the American veto by exercising its equal right to veto Mr Annan. Mr Annan is backed by the US. Britain appears also to support him though with less obvious enthusiasm.

Additional voting rounds were expected this week to assess the solidity of the French position. Supporters of Mr Annan are crossing fingers that Paris, once it has made its point to the US, can be persuaded to back down and allow his selection.

Consistent opposition by France to Mr Annan could kill his candidacy, however. There are three other new candidates from Africa, which, by unwritten convention, can expect to have one of their own in the Secretary General's office for the next five years. But so far none have attracted sufficient support to be electable. His closest rival is Amara Essy, the Foreign Minister of Ivory Coast. He got six votes in his favour yesterday, against 11 for Mr Annan.

It is far from clear France's objections to Mr Annan are anything but political. An urbane, popular figure, he has dedicated his life to the organisation and at 58 is seen as a competent if unexciting candidate for its most senior position. "This is about France's political pique with the United States," one diplomat said. "I don't think the French have anything to say about Annan in terms of his qualifications, they just want to tell the Americans, 'We can play that game too'."



Bill Clinton: Speech affirmed commitment to continue the centrist policies which won him the presidential election

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Battered and bleeding: Chechnya looks beyond ruins of a fallen empire

Phil Reeves
Grozny

Given that he had every reason to believe that he would die on the battlefields of Chechnya, Sergei was understandably relieved to be going home. But he was also indignant.

"This place is an entirely different country," he said, standing beside his tank on the outskirts of Grozny. "I don't know what the war's objective was. It was simply misguided and wrong."

The 21-year-old Russian, along with thousands of other young men, was preparing to leave following the Kremlin's decision to withdraw from Chechnya before next month's

elections here. They are packing their bags knowing they leave behind a bloodbath in a country that their army failed to tame, despite the loss of at least 4,000 Russian servicemen.

It was a terrible war, even by the ghastly standards of the 20th century. Yesterday was the second anniversary of the day President Boris Yeltsin sent his troops in for what he believed would be a swift victory which would rejuvenate his popularity and crush the Chechen leader, Dzhokhar Dudayev, who had proclaimed Chechnya an independent state in 1991.

To his horror, the Chechens mounted a furious resistance and maintained it, even after the Russians systematically bombed

their villages, and carried on despite Mr Yeltsin's assurances to a scandalously indifferent West that military operations were over.

"From the beginning, the war was characterised by massive, appalling violations of humanitarian law," said Human Rights Watch Helsinki in a report which warns that many problems have yet to be settled in the

aftermath of hostilities. But although the carnage was appalling – estimates of the death toll varies wildly from 20,000 to 100,000 – the Chechens can claim some measure of success.

The Russian army has been humiliated by small force of rebels and is leaving, without disarming them.

The shadow of Moscow will

still loom over the North Caucasus, but Chechnya is now in the hands of a government of separatists, and will remain so after the elections, scheduled for 27 January – two days after the Russians say their last soldier will have left.

The war did not settle the most important issue of all: the republic's legal status. Under the August peace agreement, both

sides agreed to postpone a decision until 2001. They are maintaining what diplomats call "constructive ambiguity" over the issue.

There is, however, nothing ambiguous about their positions. Moscow insists Chechnya is part of the Russian Federation. The Chechens believe that they are an independent nation.

"Of course we are not going

to deny that we are an independent republic," said Brigadier General Kasbek Makhshayev, the Chechen Minister of the Interior. "Independence either exists or it doesn't. But we do understand that our relations [with Moscow] must be established on mutually beneficial principles."

While the republic's status is unresolved, the place remains in

Homecoming: A Chechen refugee amid the rubble of Grozny
Photograph: Reuters

limbo. Few foreigners will want to invest without knowing whether it is a country or not. Yet it is in ruins, in desperate need of money to rebuild the wrecked schools, universities, hospitals, institutes, roads, and talented people to run them.

Inevitably, all eyes turn to Russia. Optimistic-sounding discussions have taken place between Moscow and Grozny about investment. But Russia is in financial chaos, unable to pay its coal miners and pensioners, let alone its old enemies in the Caucasus.

Hope has faded on a Russian-Chechen agreement over oil. One of two pipelines which will carry oil from the Caspian Sea runs from Baku to the Black Sea via Chechnya. Russia's desire to control the pipeline was another reason it started the war. A tariff-sharing deal may yield valuable income for the Chechens.

Yet it is hard to believe that this could ever supply the billions of dollars needed to rebuild their home. There are other flickers of hope: Chechnya has ties with Saudi Arabia and other Muslim nations, which may agree to chip in funds, especially if it means deepening its Islamic roots.

But it is all as cloudy as the winter fog over the Caucasus mountains. Even the most optimistic economists would find it hard to believe that enough money will flow in to Chechnya to secure its destiny as a modern society, and not just a Third World bazaar, surrounded by the ruins of a fallen empire.

Russia eases relations with Nato

Christopher Bellamy
Defence Correspondent

Relations between Nato and Russia took a step forward yesterday as the second day of a summit in Brussels between foreign ministers in Brussels, and then other east European nations were present. The meeting was welcomed by the news that the Russians have a civilian Defence Minister for the first time in their history, unless you count Trotsky and Stalin.

General Igor Rodionov, who has just passed his 60th birthday, has retired from the army but remains Defence Minister, thus nearly accomplishing a manoeuvre which the Russians have found difficult. A civilian defence minister is seen as a key indicator of a Western-style democracy – Poland has one, but Ukraine and Russia – until yesterday – did not.

In Brussels, Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov was "very positive" in meetings with the 16 Nato foreign Ministers in the "16 plus one" forum, although in the subsequent press conference he was critical of Nato's plans to enlarge to embrace new members from eastern Europe. The Russians privately accept that Nato enlargement will happen, but maintain opposition in public, probably for domestic consumption. Most importantly, Mr Primakov uncoupled discussion of Nato enlargement from cooperation with Nato on other fronts.

Later, other east European countries joined the discussions and Ukraine welcomed Nato's announcement it had no plans to move nuclear weapons into the territory of new members, including Ukraine's immediate neighbour, Poland. The North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC) forum includes Nato plus 26 Nato

"partners" from eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.

Nato sources also said Mr Primakov is the main contact for relations between Nato and Russia, which is good news as he has been more forthcoming than other Russian ministers.

Russia's demobilised Defence Minister recently said he, too, was convinced Nato was not a threat to Russia but that he had "millions of people" to convince. Mr Rodionov was born into a military family on 1 December 1936 and served as a tank officer. He served with the 40th Army in Afghanistan during the hardest fighting of the entire war, where he nearly lost a kidney after suffering dehydration in the intense heat.

Mr Rodionov's continuation as the first "civilian" Defence Minister is highly appropriate because he has written extensively about civil-military relations and the touchy relationship between the Russian leadership and the army. In a recent article he said that although the political leadership understood the need for an army, they were also "somewhat afraid" of it, and for this reason had "used any opportunity to demean the army and undermine its authority."

General Rodionov: Convinced Nato is no threat to Russia

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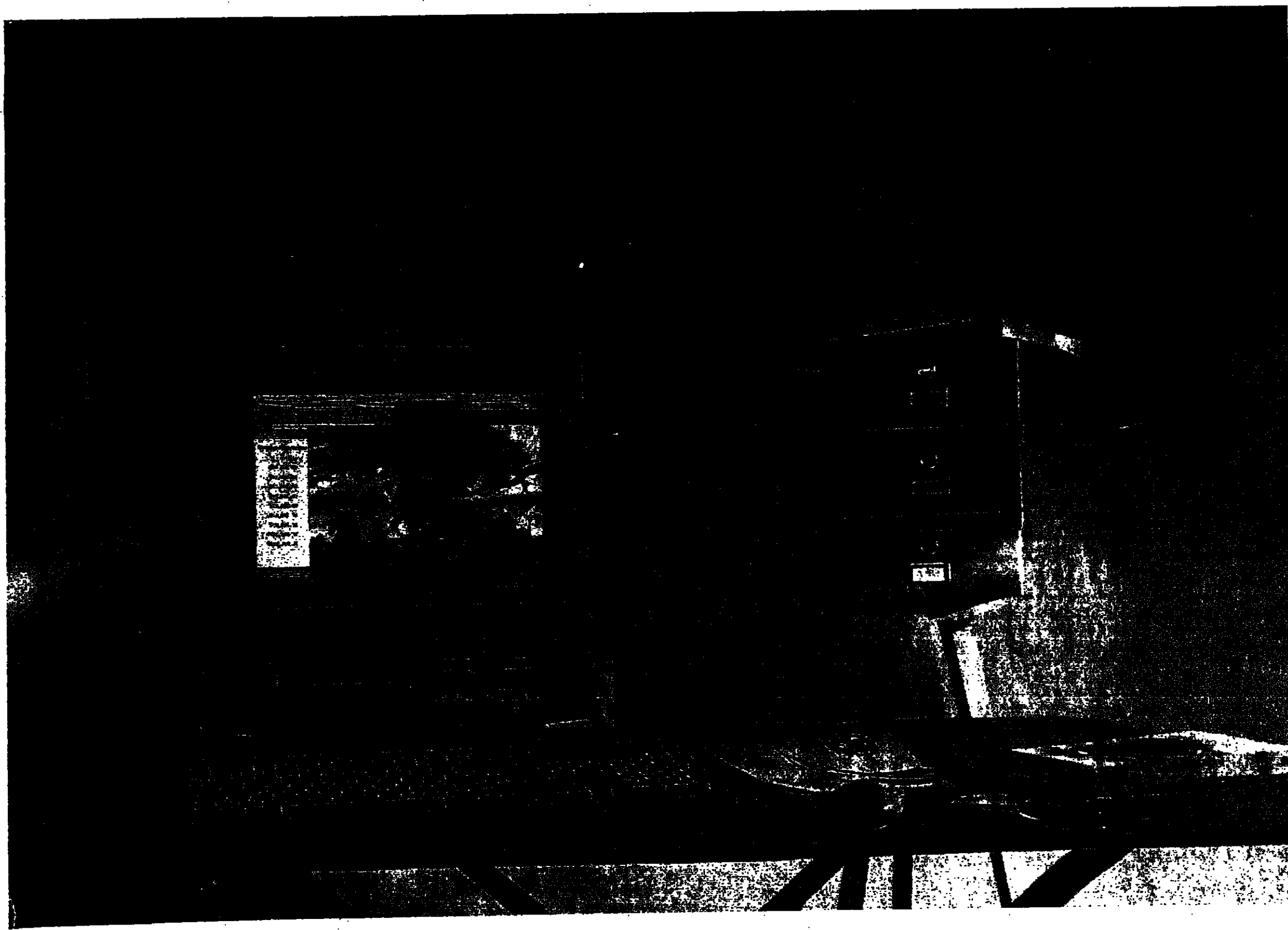
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Mafia trawls Venice's dark lagoon

Italy's jewel has become a haven for organised crime, writes Andrew Gumbel

The deputy mayor of Venice, Gianfranco Bettin, hopped across the lagoon one evening last month to have dinner with his parents in the industrial suburb of Marghera. The meal finished early, and shortly after 8.30pm he got in his car to drive home. Suddenly, a young thug jumped up from the back seat, grabbed him by the neck and put a pistol to his temple. "Drive," he ordered in a thick southern Italian accent.

Bettin drove to a remote wasteland, where he was ordered to stop and throw the car keys out of the window. A large black car pulled up behind. "Mr Mayor," said the young thug, tightening his grip around Bettin's neck and cocking his pistol, "you should mind your own business." With that, he pulled the trigger. For a second Bettin thought he was dead, but in fact all he heard was a light click. He was terrified, but still alive. The thug snarled: "Next time the gun will be loaded." Then he got out of the car.

It could have been a scene from an American gangster movie. In Venice, it seemed utterly out of place. This is the

miraculous lagoon city, the ultimate symbol of civilisation, a tourist mecca and capital of one of Italy's most prosperous regions: in Venice people aren't supposed to do things like that. And yet, as much of Italy has been shocked to learn, they do.

La Serenissima may be a jewel of western civilisation, but in the past few years it has also become an outpost of frenetic, and lucrative, Mafia activity. Money-laundering, drugs trafficking and illegal arms dealing are booming in the Venice region, and with them extortion, armed robbery, kidnapping and murder. Many rackets are in the hands of local gangs, but as prosecutors and politicians such as Deputy Mayor Bettin have discovered, the traditional Mafias of Sicily, Calabria and Naples are muscling in, too.

In the weeks leading up to his mock execution, Bettin had been hot on the heels of a Neapolitan Mafia convict called Crescenzo Napolitano, who had taken full advantage of being assigned to live in Marghera - a sort of internal exile ordered by the courts - by plugging into the Venetian organised crime circuit and terrorising the community. The Sicilians are active in laundering money via casinos both in the Venice area and across the border in Slovenia. The Calabrians have established a network of hotels, restaurants and other tourist money-spinners again, in the interests of recycling the illegal gains of drugs, arms and other major international rackets.

Take a gondola ride in Venice and you may be contributing directly to a Mafia money-laundering operation. Take up the gondolier's recommendation of a cosy restaurant and you may be helping the criminals further. Go to the municipal casino on the Grand Canal, and the chances are that your cashier will be a placeman for the Mob. It's not that the authorities are refusing to do anything about this; they are unable to keep up with it. No sooner is one batch of crooked casino cashiers arrested than another takes its place. Hotels and pizzerias, according to a report by the anti-Mafia investigator Giovanni Verdiciochio, change owners "at an alarmingly high rate".

There are two reasons why the Venice region has become so attractive to organised crime. The first is the economic boom which began in the 1960s and has turned the area into one of the richest in Europe. Not only can the Mob count on a cut of the construction industry, muscle in on tourism, establish a lucrative prostitution racket and sell drugs to the children of the affluent middle classes, but it can also use the region's businesses and financial institutions to launder its gains from international narcotics and arms trade. According to Gen-



Murky water. For centuries regarded as a centre of Western civilisation, Venice is now acquiring a quite different reputation as an outpost of frenetic, and highly lucrative, Mafia activity

eral Verdiciochio, the Mafia runs some 8,500 finance companies in the region, 500 in Venice.

The second reason is the lifting of the Iron Curtain and the opening of vast new criminal markets in eastern Europe. Yugoslavia is a stone's throw away. In a recent trial, it emerged Italian arms traders were phoning up the Slovenian police and arranging deliveries of arms by boat across the Adriatic with the same ease as ordering take-out pizza.

For years, the leader of the region's gangland activities was a charismatic rogue called Felice Maniero who was considered a folk hero for his audacious and unorthodox armed robberies. Nicknamed

Angel Face for his boyish features, he once walked out of customs at Venice airport with 170 kg of gold. On another occasion, he persuaded the manager of the Hotel des Bains on

looking the other way as a group of friends dressed up as carabinieri drove through the main gates to pick him up. And yet Maniero was a nasty piece of work, a self-confessed

special anti-Mafia investigative force and two years later, Maniero and 101 others were sentenced to long jail terms.

The collapse of Maniero's empire has left a vacuum at the top of the Venetian Mafia, but has not brought the criminal activity to an end. "The boss, his generals and colonels may have been neutralised but the rest are still hard at work," Gianfranco Bettin warned in the wake of his brush with death.

What his mock execution shows is that a power struggle for the Venetian rackets is in full swing, the results of which are likely to be unpredictable and dangerous. The attack on Bettin could be just the beginning.

multiple murderer responsible for setting up the network of organised crime in the northeast and forging links with the southern Mafia bosses.

In 1992, the authorities set up a regional branch of their

the Lido to hand over £2m worth of jewellery and cash belonging to the hotel guests.

His magic touch extended to jailbreaks - including one from a high security prison in Padua where he bribed the guards into

Just by taking a ride on a gondola you may be contributing directly to a money-laundering operation

Photograph: Brian Harris

significant shorts

Algerian rebels kill 20 in bus attack

Algerian Muslim rebels killed 20 passengers on an overnight bus, apparently by slitting their throats, in an attack just south of the capital Algiers early yesterday, according to an official statement.

The guerrillas forced the bus to stop as it travelled in the Benhamdani area in Blida province at about 3am. Algerian security forces said the 20 people were killed "in a cowardly way", a phrase used for attacks in which victims have their throats cut. Seven people were wounded in the raid. The latest attack brought to nearly 60 the number reported killed in Blida province in under a week. The provincial capital of the same name is just 30 miles south of Algiers.

Reuter - Paris

Mandela signs abortion bill

President Nelson Mandela has signed South Africa's new abortion bill, clearing the way for one of the world's toughest abortion laws to be replaced with one of the most liberal. The law gives girls of any age the sole right to decide whether to have an abortion.

Reuter - Johannesburg

Push on panda programme

China has set out to breed more pandas in captivity. Eight panda cubs were born in captivity this year and three of them survived, China News Agency said. China hopes that a mating programme and artificial insemination would boost the number of panda pregnancies to between 40 and 60 over the next four years. It hopes 80 per cent will survive.

Reuter - Peking

Nato force sees Karadzic under Serb escort

International police in Bosnia said they spotted the indicted war criminal Radovan Karadzic under armed escort but the Nato-led force took no action to arrest him. International police monitors saw Mr Karadzic in a Jeep on Monday, escorted by special police in the Serb government seat of Pale, outside Sarajevo.

A spokesman for the UN police said: "In the back seat with the window open the monitors saw one of the most wanted men on the planet, Radovan Karadzic, enjoying the view." Reuter - Sarajevo

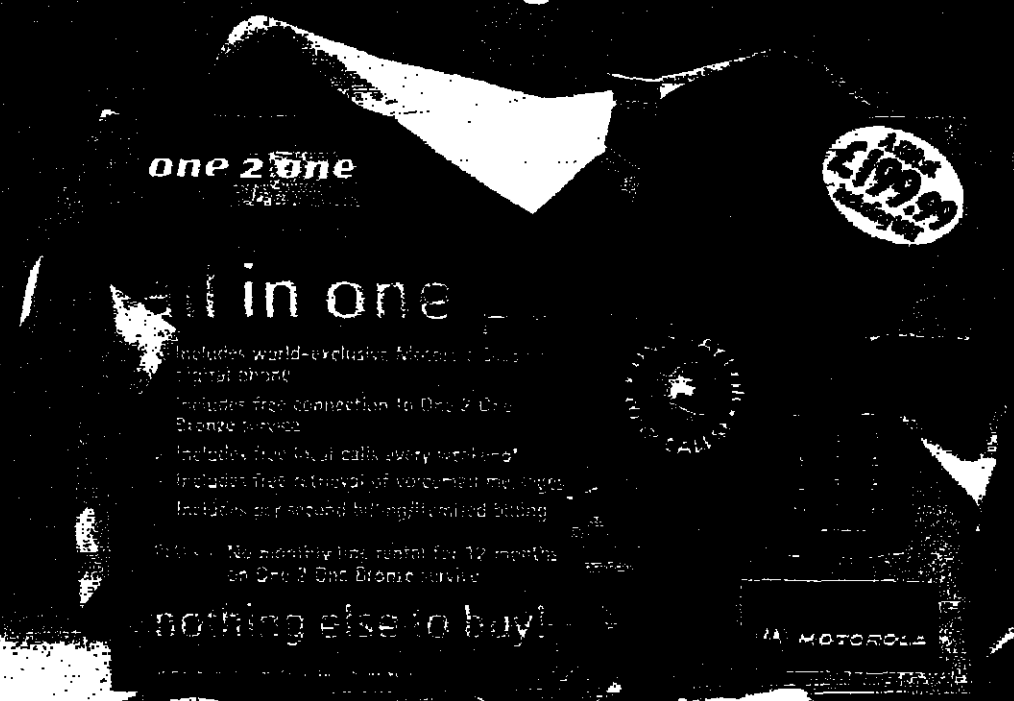
The secret of Mao's tea set

Porcelain made secretly under military guard for the Chinese leader Mao Tse-tung are to be sold at auction on Saturday. The rice bowls, tea cups and other pieces were ordered for Mao in 1975, when his cult of personality was at its height. Mao's aides ordered that it be of unsurpassed quality and fired at 1,400C, hotter than the 1,300C used to fire pottery in imperial times. AP - Peking

Finns bail out Bethlehem

A day after Bethlehem officials said they lacked the money to celebrate Christmas properly, Finland announced it was sending a 40ft Christmas tree and a Santa Claus to the West Bank town. The 40-year-old tree will stand in Manger Square outside the Church of the Nativity. The Santa will arrive with the Christmas Day procession and will entertain pilgrims and visitors, assisted by Palestinian children dressed as gnomes. AP - Jerusalem

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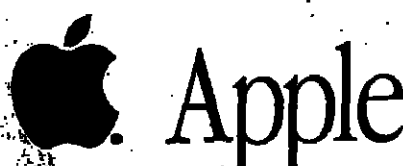
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obituaries / gazette

Faron Young

Faron Young was one of country music's greatest vocalists, if perhaps an occasionally underrated one.

His appealing, expressive tenor was equally at home with both ballads and up-tempo numbers, and whilst he could croon effortlessly, the more dramatic and emotive approach that he favoured on many of his 1950s recordings confirms him as an important link between Hank Williams and many of the country stars who have followed.

Over a nearly 50-year career Young enjoyed a string of hits, some 42 of them making it into the country Top Ten. During that time he championed many of the genre's most important songwriters, "discovered" the likes of Roger Miller and Kris Kristofferson and became one of Nashville's most memorable characters.

If he also appeared somewhat reckless, it seemed only to endear him to his fans even more. Over the years he weathered alcoholism, marital problems and several brushes with the law - he was famously convicted of assaulting a minor in 1972 - yet few could have anticipated his suicide.

Young was born, the son of a dairy farmer, at Shreveport, Louisiana, in 1932. He began performing whilst still in his teens and was inevitably drawn to the area's most important radio show, the *KWKH Louisiana Hayride*. This, the so-called "Cradle of the Stars" was, from 1948, a springboard to national celebrity for many of the country's leading performers, including Hank Williams, Jim Reeves, Jim Horton and even Elvis Presley. Having built up a local following Young was asked to join the show's cast and

found himself working as a featured vocalist with the honky-tonk star Webb Pierce.

In 1952 however, and in common with many others at the *Hayride*, he was lured to Nashville's prestigious WSM Grand Ole Opry. Capitol Records signed him to a contract and his future looked assured until the Korean War intervened. Drafted, he was assigned to performing for the troops, working with a young actor and announcer named Leonard Nimoy.

Whilst on leave, Young went into the recording studio and cut "Goin' Steady", a No 2 hit in 1953. Following his discharge a year later he returned to Nashville and rapidly established himself as one of the major hitmakers of the era, scoring with, among others, "If You Ain't Lovin' (You Ain't Livin')", "Live Fast, Love Hard and Die", "Young Man", "Miss You A Little", "Alone With You" (1958) and "Backtrack" (1961).

Young had a fine ear for quality songwriting and, in addition to recording numbers by veterans like Ted Daffan ("I've Got Five Dollars and It's Saturday Night"), was among the first to cut songs by the likes of Roy Drusky ("Country Girl"), Bill Anderson ("Riverboat"), Don Gibson and Willie Nelson. Gibson's classic "Sweet Dreams" charted for Young in 1956, and five years later he took Nelson's "Hello Walls" all the way to No 1. Young and Nelson remained friends and in 1983 cut a fine duet album together, *Funny How Time Slips Away*.

Others who benefited from Young's encouragement included the country star Johnny Paycheck, whom he employed as a bass guitarist, the singer,

songwriter and actor Kris Kristofferson, and Roger Miller, who had been working as a Nashville bell-hop until Young took him on as a drummer.

All the while, Young had been enjoying a parallel career in films, though the results, including the western *Hidden Guns* (1956), in which he appeared opposite Angie Dickinson, and *Country Music Holiday* (1958) are largely and justifiably forgotten. It was, however, his work in the former that was to give him his nickname: "The Singing Sheriff".

In 1962 Young left Capitol and signed to Mercury Records. The hits continued with "You'll Drive Me Back Into Her Arms Again" (1963), "Walk Tall" (1965) and the Kristofferson song, "Your Time's Coming" (1969). In 1972 Young enjoyed an international crossover success with Jerry Chesnut's waltz, "It's Four in the Morning", a record that made it into the British Top Ten.

As the hits began to dry up, Young concentrated increasingly upon his extensive business interests, including publishing houses, a talent agency and the Nashville country music magazine *Music City News*.

Three years ago, when Willie Nelson was inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame, he made a plea for Faron Young to soon follow. That richly deserved honour cannot now be far off.

Paul Wade

Faron Young, country singer, actor, and songwriter, born Shreveport, Louisiana, 25 February 1932; married (four children; marriage dissolved); died Nashville, Tennessee 10 December 1996.



Young: 'The Singing Sheriff'

Photograph: Rediferns

Sir Basil Nield

Basil Nield personified Shakespeare's view that a man in his life plays many parts. In Nield's case, with great distinction, he pursued the roles of lawyer, churchman, politician, soldier and bon vivant.

He and his twin sister, Beryl, were the youngest of five children born to Charles Edwin Nield, a solicitor, JP and Registrar of the Liverpool High Court. Their mother was an MBE and PhD - the first female graduate ever to obtain a doctorate at St Andrews University.

Nield was educated at Harrow (where he served as a governor, 1961-71) and Magdalen College, Oxford, during which time he became chairman of the Chester Conservative Association. In 1925 at the age of 22 he was called to the Bar of the Inner Temple and entered chambers in Liverpool, where he practised in general common law, on the Northern Circuit. His meticulous preparation, the quality of his advocacy and his unfailing courtesy made it obvious that he was destined for success at the Bar, and his practice grew. He then entered the chambers of David Maxwell Fyfe (later Lord Kilmuir and a Tory Lord Chancellor). He and his wife Sylvia became his closest friends.

In 1938, foreseeing correctly the implications of the Munich crisis, he joined the Officers' Emergency Reserve. Meanwhile, in 1940 he entered the House of Commons as Conservative Member for Chester. The same year he was commissioned into a captain's rank, and served successfully as major, GHQ Middle Eastern Force (MEF) and, in 1942, as President, Palestine Military Courts, Jerusalem, and on the HQ staffs of East Africa Force, Eritrea and the Eighth Army, Persia and Iraq, and of the Second Army through the Low Countries and on the Rhine. He was mentioned in despatches when serving as Deputy Judge Advocate General in the MEF. His service in these roles was recognised by a MBE (military) and his advancement to lieutenant colonel as Judge Advocate, sitting in on the courts martial in Germany.

Always assiduous in his work as a judge, nevertheless Nield had an eye for the lighter side of life, in and out of court. This was the genesis of his book *Foreword to the Asstices* (1972), a series of entertaining memoirs illustrated by his own line-drawings and photographs. It marked too his singular achievement as the only judge to have sat in all 61 Assize towns in England and Wales before the abolition of the Assize system in 1972.

It was appropriate that the graceful dedication of the book should be to his twin sister, a mayor of Chester, to whom he was extremely close and who, like him, never married. She helped him a great deal when he was an MP and often sat beside him on the bench. Her death, 20 years ago, was a heavy blow to him.

Forever restless, Nield loved to travel. He was a great "collector" of cities all over the world. A keen and accomplished photographer, he used his beautiful pictures to illustrate his Christmas cards, which were much prized among his friends.

Equally prized were his birthday and Christmas parties in his flat in the Temple. There, his sparkle and charm were let free among his great variety of friends. There too he achieved one of the honours he prized above all: Treasurer of the Inner Temple.

His last years were spent in the King Edward VII Convalescent Home for Officers, at Osborne House in the Isle of Wight.

landmark: a Private Member's Bill, leading to the Adoption of Children Act, 1949. He saw it as the precursor to a whole of affairs in which matters of inheritance and succession an adopted child would be in a position similar to that of a natural child.

Nield was among the most dapper of the Members. Five foot seven and shrimingly shod, his penetrating brown eyes, missed nothing. A provocative and witty speaker and a great debunker of pomposity, Nield was popular both in the Commons and his constituency.

In 1948 he served as Recorder of Salford and, in 1952, was elected Master of the Bench of the Inner Temple. His advancement to CBE took place in 1956, at which time, too, he was chosen as the first permanent judge of the Crown Court, Manchester. This meant that he had to leave the House of Commons; a change which exhilarated him, though he missed the cut and thrust of parliamentary debate.

Such was the accuracy of Nield's judgments that it was rare for a sentence of his to be altered on appeal. Always humanitarian, however, in his dealings, he is on record as having modified one of his own sentences. After thinking all weekend about a prison sentence he had imposed, he had the man brought back into court from the cells. He told him that he might have been too severe and he reduced the sentence.

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Avril Morrison

Basil Edward Nield, judge, and politician; born 7 May 1903; called to the Bar, Inner Temple, 1925; Master of the Bench 1952; Reader 1976; Treasurer 1977; MP (Conservative) City of Chester 1940-56; MBE (military) 1943; CBE 1956; KC 1945; Recorder of Salford 1948-56; Recorder and first permanent Judge of Crown Court at Manchester 1956-60; Judge of High Court 1960-78; died 4 December 1996.



Nield: accuracy in judgment

Kashiwado

In the last few years, the noble Japanese art of sumo, the national sport *par excellence*, has become increasingly popular in the West. When the Japanese first heard that Western audiences were going to witness sumo bouts, they were incredulous - just as they were when the first drama troupes of kabuki and noh left for America and Europe. To their great surprise, Westerners were able to appreciate these native displays of artistic and sporting techniques that in Japan were regarded as understandable "only by a Japanese".

I well remember when the

first sumo troupe visited Paris, and performed there to very appreciative audiences that included many Japanese. Of course, the whole atmosphere of ritual and feudal authority associated with a true sumo arena was lacking. But some of the ceremonial was observed, with the entrance of the sumo-ri in the ring, wearing their brilliantly dyed heavy aprons under the hanging curtained roof. It is always an impressive sight, a procession of ponderous gravity. On that occasion, my favourite sumotori, Kirishima, who was fairly slender compared with some of the heavyweights like Konishi-

ki, was dubbed "the Alain Delon of Japan", which I thought was not much of a compliment for that beautiful athlete.

Like many of the best wrestlers, Kashiwado came from one of the northern provinces, Yamagata. His family name was Togashi, and he first appeared in the Bumo ring in 1954, from the Ise no Umi stable. He had endured the severe hardships of apprenticeship and worked hard every day to improve his physique and his fighting spirit that was to make him one of the very best sumo wrestlers in the history of the sport.

In 1958, he made the first step upwards in the pyramidal structure of sumo status when his name first appeared on the *banzuke* or list of wrestlers appearing in the *basho* or contest. He made such good progress, he was elevated in 1960 to the rank of *ozeki*, and won fight after fight until in October 1961 he accepted the lofty position of *Zokozuna* or Grand Champion, a meteoric rise such as has rarely been seen in such a demanding sport with its carefully graded hierarchies and venerable traditions.

For the sport of sumo dates back to almost mythological times, and was mentioned in the

Nihon Shoki or "Chronicle of Japan" 30 volumes, completed in 720 AD. It is therefore a great achievement to reach the rank of Grand Champion. In the same year, Kashiwado's great rival, Taiho, was also elevated to Grand Champion, and their legendary bouts gave rise to the name *hakuho*, describing the period in which their fame and popularity grew by leaps and bounds, and thus helped to improve the standing of the sport.

Kashiwado in his long career won 599 times, lost 240 bouts. While he was Grand Champion, he had 407 wins and 107 losses. Altogether, as *Zokozuna*

he won five *basho*. He retired from the ring, in the middle of a match, during the 1969 July *basho*, before a shocked but deeply moved audience, many of them in tears.

He then set up his own sumo stable, the Kagamiyama-beya, in Tokyo's Edogawa Ward. He also served as a director of the Japan Sumo Association, heading its referee committee until 1994.

Togashi Tsuyoshi ("Kashiwado"), sumo wrestler; born Yamagata, Japan 1938; married (two daughters); died Tokyo 8 December 1996.

James Kirkup

Howard E. Rollins Jr



Fighting for what I want: Rollins in the 1988 television series of *In the Heat of the Night*

The actor Howard E. Rollins Jr made his film debut in Miles Forman's *Ragtime* (1981) as Coalhouse Walker, the cool, sophisticated ragtime pianist who becomes head of a group of black revolutionaries. *Variety* praised his "staggeringly effective portrayal of conscience-wracked pride" and "intense screen magnetism that bodes instant stardom".

For a time it looked as if Rollins would become Sidney Poitier's successor. However, in spite of unanimous praise from the critics, and an Oscar nomination for Best Supporting Actor (which he lost to John Gielgud in *Arthur*), Rollins made only one other film appearance. This was *A Soldier's Story* (1984), adapted by Charles Fuller from his stage play, and

directed by Norman Jewison, who had made Sidney Poitier's *In the Heat of the Night* (1967). Rollins gave another memorable performance as the stylish, self-assured but intense Captain Richard Davenport, one of the first black officers in the US Army, who arrives in a racist segregated training camp in wartime Louisiana to investigate the murder of a black sergeant. But this time there was no Oscar recognition or any follow-up movie roles. Years passed before Hollywood felt ready to promote a serious black actor: Denzel Washington.

Rollins was born in Baltimore, Maryland, and upset his family when he dropped out of college to work full-time as an actor. He joined the cast of a television soap produced in

Baltimore called *Our Street*, but his mother was not convinced he'd made the right choice. "Black folks just don't become movie stars," she told him. His father tried to persuade him to "get a good job".

Several years later he moved to New York, and gained valuable stage experience with the Player's Workshop. Television roles followed, including as the top US policeman Andrew Young in the mini-series *King* (1978) about Martin Luther King, and as George Haley in *Roots: the next generations* (1979). He said that *Ragtime* transformed him overnight from a "no-name that nobody knew" to an Oscar-nominated Hollywood celebrity. In 1986, in an interview with Britain's leading black newspaper, the *Voice*,

he reflected on his role as Coalhouse Walker in *Ragtime*. "He had been insulted and assaulted, so his efforts towards retribution were understandable. After he had exhausted all legal means, he was only left with the situation that if you don't understand, then I'll give you something to understand - and that is violence. The one parallel with my own life is fighting for what I want... in my case it's my career."

In the wake of his success in *A Soldier's Story*, there was talk of Rollins starring in a film about Nelson Mandela, as well as playing Othello with Al Pacino as Iago. Regrettably, neither project materialised. In 1986 Rollins came to London to appear opposite Paul Scofield in the West End production of

I'm Not Rappaport and, in 1988, he took the lead in a television series based on Poitier's *In the Heat of the Night*. Sadly, he was written out of the series because of his addiction to drugs. Carl Weathers replaced him.

In the late 1980s, when asked about his infrequent film appearances, he explained: "I'm not turning down any work. I haven't been approached with anything substantial. I don't like to say it, but it can only be because I'm black. Why else wouldn't studios take advantage of an actor who's acknowledged as capable?"

Stephen Bourne



Howard E. Rollins, actor; born Baltimore, Maryland 17 October 1950; died New York 8 December 1996.

BIRTHS

CHAMBERLAIN: To Sarah and Peter, Hugo Frederick, born 10 December, a brother for the girls.

RICE: To Matthew and Emma, a daughter, Margaret Sarah, 10 December 1996.

DEATHS

FOX: Michelle Simone, on 9 December 1996, aged 30. Film, model, dancer and choreographer, in London. After a courageous fight against cancer, she died of complications. She was the most loved sister to Jacqueline, Gerald and Claudine, and long-time love of Jeremy. Her most special spirit lives on in us all. She will be most sorely missed by her family and wide circle of friends. The funeral will take place at the Cemetery, Edgwarebury Lane, Edgware, at 1pm on Friday 12 December. Prayers will be held at the family home in Chelsea on Thursday 11 December at 7pm. All friends welcome. Telephone 0171-378-4162 for details.

HARE: Dr Edward H. Hare FRCP FRCPsych MD MA, died peacefully on 8 December 1996, at King's College Hospital, aged 79 years. Will be greatly missed by his wife Ffrs, sister Betty, daughter Anne and granddaughters Jane and Louise. Funeral at Bordenham Crematorium, Twickenham, on 12 December at 11.30am. Family flowers only please.

LEEDHAM-GRIFFIN: Dr Mary, peacefully, on 9 December at St Andrew's Care Centre, Bournemouth, aged 84, much-loved mother of Charles and Elizabeth and grandmother of Richard Kay and Sarah. Cremation in Bournemouth service at Truropton Parish Church, at 12 noon, on Friday 12 December.

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

The Queen, upon the new salvation Army Westminster Centre, London SW1. The Prince of Wales, at the National Theatre, London WC2. The Prince of Wales, at the National Theatre, London WC2. The Prince of Wales, at the National Theatre, London WC2. The Prince of Wales, at the National Theatre, London WC2.

Births, Marriages & Deaths

day 20 December; interment of solemn at Southwell, Suffolk; service at St Edmund's Church, at 2pm on Friday 20 January. No flowers, please, but donations, if desired, to Newham College Development Trust (c/o Mrs C Cooke, Newham College, Cambridge) or Friends of Southwell Hospital.

SAMUEL: Raphael, historian, died at home, his unique spirit unquenchable, a beloved teacher, comrade, friend and husband. Burial at Highgate Cemetery, Swains Lane, on 18 December, at 1.30pm. Memorial meeting to be announced.

IN MEMORIAM

BURROWS: Donald Ivan, died on 12 December 1991. A much-loved husband and father. Helene.

KEEKEE: Steve, died 12 December 1995, aged 41. "We may lament that the rose tree has blossomed - or rejoice that the thorn tree has roses." Thank you for your joy, your passion and your courage. Jeanne.

Forthcoming marriages

Mr B. G. R. Kellett and Miss C. P. McGrath

The engagement is announced between Benedict, second son of Mr and Mrs R. R. Kellett, of Staines, Middlesex, and Clare, daughter of Mr and Mrs M. McGrath, of Grafton, West Sussex.

Birthdays

Miss Tracy Austin, tennis player, 36; Mr Lionel Blair, dancer and entertainer, 65; Maj-Gen Sir Rupert Brazier-Cragg, former Director of Staff Duties, War Office, 87; Mr Will Cartling, England rugby player, 31; Miss Denise Coffey, actress, director and writer, 60; Mr Jasper Conran, fashion designer, 37; Mr Kenneth Cranham, actor, 52; The Hon Mrs Cynthia Dawood MP, 60; Mr William Ebert, chairman and managing director, Vauxhall Motors, 54; Miss Conna Francis, singer, 58; Mr Roy Grantham, former national secretary, Apex, 70; Air Commodore Dame Felicity Hill, former Director, WRAF, 81; Dr Philip Ledger, Principal, British Academy of Music and Drama, 59; Mr Christopher Mullin MP, 44; Mr Frank Sinatra, singer and actor, 81; Mr Clive Thornton, chairman, Gabriel Communications, 67; The Right Rev John Wakefield, former Bishop of Southwell, 78; Miss Dianna Warwick, singer, 55.

Anniversaries

Birch: Admiral Samuel Hood, First Viscount, naval commander, 1724; Edward Munch, painter, 1863; Edward G. Robinson (Emanuel Goldemberg), actor, 1893; John James Osborne, playwright and actor, 1929; Death: Darius II Nothus ("The Bastard"), King of Persia, 404 BC; Robert Browning, poet, 1889; Talullah Brockenbank, actress, 1968. On this day the first transatlantic radio signal was transmitted by Marconi, 1901; the first motel opened, in California, 1925; the first London production of the musical show *West Side Story* was staged, 1958. Today is the Feast Day of St Corentin or Coren, St Edmundo of Milnes, Saints Epimachus and Alexander, St Flimian of Clonard, St Jane Frances de Chantal and St Vicella.

Lectures

Victoria and Albert Museum: Pippa Shirley, "Silver" (talk for visitors with visual impairments), 2.30pm.

Tate Gallery: Clement Page, "The Emancipation of Colour and Form: Expressionism in modern European art", 1pm.

British Museum: Hilary Williams, "Subject and Media: the remarkable range of Michelangelo drawings in the British Museum", 1.15pm.

National Portrait Gallery: Jacob Simon, "The Art of the Picture Frame: framing at the National Portrait Gallery 1856-1996", 1.10pm.

Changing of the Guard

The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment present the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am. Nigerian Company Grenadier Guards march the Queen's Guard at Buckingham Palace, 11.30am, band provided by the Irish Guards.

Payment of lesser sum did not settle claim

LAW REPORT

12 December 1996

Ferguson v Davies; Court of Appeal (Lord Justice Evans, Lord Justice Henry, Lord Justice Aldous) 21 November 1996

Acceptance by the plaintiff of a lesser sum from the defendant than the amount claimed could not constitute accord and satisfaction so as to compromise the action between them unless the plaintiff received some additional benefit by way of consideration.

The Court of Appeal allowed an appeal by the plaintiff, Michael Ferguson, against the decision of Judge Crane, sitting in Northampton County Court on 19 July 1994, dismissing his claim for money due under a contract with the defendant, Steven Clive Davies. The plaintiff in person: Terry Lynch (L. Gannard & Allen, Olney, Bucks) for the defendant.

Lord Justice Henry said the plaintiff, wishing to dispose of some specialist records, tapes and discs, agreed with the defendant, who dealt in such items, that the defendant would provide in exchange other specialist items sought by the plaintiff to the wholesale value of £800 by a certain date, failing which the defendant would pay £1,700 in cash. In

fact the defendant only delivered goods to the value of £143.50 and made a single payment of £5.

The plaintiff claimed there was due to him approximately £1,550.

However, he originally limited his claim to £486.50, perhaps to keep it within the small claims jurisdiction. His claim was set out on the County Court's N1 default summons. The defendant completed from N9B, a form of defence and counterclaim to be filled in if he disputed all or part of the claim. In answer to the question "How much of the claim do you dispute?" he ticked the box "I admit the amount of..." and inserted £150. In answer to the question "Do you dispute the claim because you have already paid it?" he ticked "Yes" and wrote that he had paid £450 to the plaintiff. He then added that he had sent a cheque for £150.

He sent the cheque to the court with a letter saying the cheque was in settlement of the plaintiff's account, and that he did not dispute that he owed him money but disputed the to-

tal amount claimed. He wrote to the plaintiff in similar terms, concluding "I hope that this will now resolve the matter."

The plaintiff cashed the cheque but replied that he was continuing with the action until he received full payment. He got leave to amend his claim upwards to £1,745.79.

The judge found for the plaintiff on the contractual issues, holding that a further £1,400 was due from the defendant. He also found that the plaintiff had not intended to accept the £150 in full settlement, but nevertheless held that his doing so had compromised his claim by a binding accord and satisfaction.

It was clear that the judge did not address his mind to the fact that the sending of the cheque for £150 was an unqualified admission of liability, nor to the significance of such an admission.

An open admission of money due was something quite different from an offer of a sum in compromise. It was manifest that the formal admission on form N9B was not made without prejudice as part of an of-

fer to compromise, but was properly before the court on the question of liability.

The judge erred in law in that he did not consider the legal significance of the fact that the defendant had unequivocally admitted liability for the sum paid by cheque, and was not giving the plaintiff any additional benefit on top of that. Therefore there was in law no consideration for the accord suggested.

Nor did the judge pay regard to the scheme of the County Court Rules governing cases, where an admission was coupled with an assertion that the remainder of the claim had been paid. Against that background, it was wrong to conclude that the cashing of the cheque, sent as a result of a formal and unqualified admission on the pleadings, constituted "a clear and unequivocal acceptance that no further sum was due" because of a side letter seeking to impose a term for which there was no consideration once admission had been made.

Had he directed himself properly, he would inevitably have decided that there was no binding accord.

Paul Magrath, Barrister

Labour must come clean on monetary union

There is something rather peculiar about the Conservative Party quite probably throwing away the next election in order to keep open an option that Britain almost certainly will not take up. It is even more strange that the issue is one which bores the pants off most voters.

American political consultants ask how an issue "plays in Peoria", the archetypal Midwest small town. The Sun this week confirmed how the single European currency plays in our equivalent, Basildon. Its Mori poll in The Town Where The Last Election Was Lost found 64 per cent opposed to replacing the pound with the euro. But The Sun's Europhobic glee was tempered by another finding: that Europe ranked only ninth in the list of issues bothering the voters there. However, the phobes are right at least in this: that the question is one of the most important facing the country, and that the voters ought to bother about it more.

The other peculiarity of the Tory Party's protracted suicide is that Labour is just as unclear about precisely the same issue. Although Tony Blair is not under the same pressure from his own party to rule out adopting the euro when it is launched in two years' time, he seems just as evasive with the voters. Partly that is because the Tories are in government, while Labour still enjoys some of the irresponsibility of opposition. But the main

reason why the Tories are so much more divided than Labour is because the split is not really about the narrow question of whether or not to join in monetary union on 1 January 1999. For the Tories, much more than for Labour, the real issue is the terms of our membership of the European Union. It is becoming increasingly clear that if the Tories lose the election they will go into the following election under a Eurosceptic leader pledged to "renegotiate" the terms of Britain's membership. This is what lends its particular unreality to Kenneth Clarke's campaign to keep the 1999 option open.

Which brings us to the party which seems at present more likely to form the government next spring. There is at least a case for arguing that Mr Blair's stance on monetary union probably now matters more to people's everyday future lives than Mr Major's views, which matter more to the future of the Conservative Party. So what is Labour's position? Last month, Gordon Brown promised that there would be a referendum if a Labour government wanted to join in the next parliament. This was significant mainly as confirmation that Britain is very unlikely to join in the first wave. Public opinion is not ready for it – unlike other European countries, where the decision was made when the Maastricht Treaty was signed in 1993. The British may not care that much about Europe,

but they know what they don't like. And, frankly, the British economy is not ready for it either.

But something else important has happened in the last few months. Two of the Shadow Cabinet's leading doubters have decided that Britain cannot afford to remain outside the single currency for long. Robin Cook, the shadow Foreign Secretary, said last month: "If a single currency proceeds I personally very much doubt whether it is possible in the medium term for Britain to stay out." This could mean joining in a "delayed first wave" with Italy, in, say, 2002. David Blunkett,

another former sceptic who is likely to be a powerful figure in a Labour Cabinet, agrees. As a result, John Prescott, who described himself bluntly as "not a fan of the single currency" during the party's leadership election two years ago, would have to fall into line.

Indeed it may no longer be strictly relevant what Labour politicians think of the single currency. Note that we have not heard for some time that the party is "in favour in principle". Instead, the line is that it could have benefits, but there are also disadvantages. The terms of the debate have shifted, because the single currency is

now almost certain to go ahead.

But it is not too late to influence many of the important decisions about its launch. This week Helmut Kohl and Jacques Chirac failed to resolve their differences over France's demand for a more politically accountable European Central Bank. This is an opportunity for Mr Blair, because it is also Labour's policy that EU finance ministers should set the rules under which the Central Bank operates. And it is not just an opportunity for Mr Blair – it is also an opportunity for Europe. We are doubtful about the single currency in part because we are concerned that the policies of the Central Bank would be out of the reach of democratically elected governments. Mr Clark repeatedly asserted yesterday that it was essential that the Government continue being involved in the negotiations to protect and advance Britain's interests. But it is likely to be up to his Labour shadow to take the discussions forward.

Still, Labour would have very little time to engage in the negotiations if it were elected in May. That is why the leadership should start preparing voters now for the choices ahead. For too long, Mr Blair has followed in the Prime Minister's slipstream, while accusing him of being led by Tory sceptics. Mr Cook's statement is an important first step in being honest with the people, but we need to know more about what Labour intends. It has a

chance to move the EU a little way towards the European Confederacy which we advocate, in which we dump the semi-mystical goal of "ever-closer union", and in which a single currency could be subjected to democratic controls so that the peoples of Europe feel that they still have a say in their destiny. We want to hear about that, loud and clear, from Labour's top table.

This time Willetts gets it right

Jaws dropped. MPs muttered "disgraceful". They weren't referring to David Willetts's behaviour, but to the Committee on Standards and Privileges which condemned him and triggered his resignation from the Government. Isn't this bizarre? The man was caught red-handed trying to manipulate the Commons investigation into the "cash-for-questions" affair, and pretended to the committee that he was doing nothing of the sort. Of course he was right to resign.

But in a government stuffed full of ministers such as Messrs Lyell and Waldegrave, who have hung on in spite of far more questionable behaviour, Mr Willetts's resignation is remarkable indeed. Let us applaud his decision to go with the same vigour with which we condemned his original misdeed.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Painting's not the only art, Sir Denis

Sir: There was much to be thankful for when Sir Denis Mahon's generous bequest was announced ("A £25m art gift to the nation... with strings attached", 3 December). Not only will it transform the representation of Italian Baroque painting in our public collections, it will also embarrass the Government due to its stipulation that paintings must be withdrawn if museums are underfunded or sell works from their permanent collections.

But now that more details have emerged, the bequest gives cause for concern. Sir Denis's terms seem unacceptable – or at least, they ought not to be acceptable to the National Art Collections Fund, which will own the paintings and ensure that his wishes are respected.

According to this month's *Art Newspaper*, the NACF will have to withdraw pictures from any institution which sold any painting from its permanent collection. "Sir Denis's condition refers only to the sale of paintings." Indeed, the donor proudly announced on the Radio 4 *Today* programme that he was a "paintings man" – as though this were a mark of distinction.

As it stands, if the National Gallery of Scotland or the Ashmolean were to deaccession their Bernini sculptures or Poussin drawings, the NACF would not automatically be obliged to withdraw the Mahon pictures they are receiving, whereas if they deaccessioned their Poussin paintings, it would.

As a charitable trust that acquires art in all media (recent acquisitions range from the Becket casket and a Chippendale writing desk to Canova's *Three Graces* and a video installation by Bill Viola) the NACF should not endorse a bequest that sanctions a hierarchy of art forms, with painting pre-eminence.

Its chairman, Sir Nicholas Goddard (a distinguished scholar of English literature in general and barometers in particular), should ask Sir Denis to think again. It would be wrong if a bequest intended to draw attention to the philistinism of the British government should be marred by a philistinism of its own.

JAMES HALL

London SW11

Sky failing to back Europe

Sir: David Elstein ("Channel 5 chief dishes up the other half of the Sky debate", 3 December) claims that "Sky's entertainment channels already offer more than 40 per cent EC content". The Department of National Heritage's own figures show that only Sky One is projected to go over 40 per cent in the year 1996-7. Other channels such as Sky Soap carry negligible EU content. Mr Elstein goes on to assert that Channel 4 "only managed 50 per cent". The actual figure from the most recent annual report was 58 per cent – and much higher during peak hours.

Mr Elstein argues that second-hand TV content is as cheap from Europe as it is from the United States. It isn't. American companies have large production stocks, often with high production values, that can be sold into European markets cheaply. By this stage, the production costs have



already been recovered in the home US market.

He argues that 51 per cent EU quotas would offer no industrial, cultural or consumer benefits. Since 1990, the deficit in the audiovisual market between the EU and the US has grown from virtually nothing to \$6.3bn. The growth in the number of TV channels has not been accompanied by a growth in European TV content. New unregulated channels such as Sky have chosen to import programmes from the US because they are cheaper. Had they used European programmes, it could have created thousands of jobs throughout the EU. If the UK government were to enforce EU quotas, BSkyB would have to invest over £50m in our cultural industries in the same way as Canal Plus invests £80m in French and European TV content.

CAROLE TONGUE MEP

(London East, Lab)

Ilford, Essex

Ilford, Essex

Ilford, Essex

Ilford, Essex

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of whom are men, tell us women we have no choice in the matter? What does a man know anyway about the agonising choice a woman with an unwanted pregnancy has to make? We pro-choice supporters speak out before it is too late.

Mrs P L COHEN

London NW3

Sir: Suzanne Moore refers to an opinion poll finding that "72 per cent of both Conservative and Labour supporters said that a candidate's stance on abortion would not alter the way they voted".

Ms Moore claims this as evidence that there is no mileage in candidates making an issue of abortion.

On the contrary, it is highly significant that 26 per cent of voters are liable to change their vote on an issue which all parties try to sweep under the carpet. I suspect that this is a far higher percentage than those who might change their vote over, say, a single European currency.

ALAN PAVELIN

Chislehurst, Kent

Chislehurst, Kent

Chislehurst, Kent

Chislehurst, Kent

Chislehurst, Kent

Chislehurst, Kent

Chislehurst, Kent

Chislehurst, Kent

Chislehurst, Kent

Jews and 72 per cent of Catholics, while the Church of England has drawn up special guidelines for the rapidly growing number of cases its ministers are facing.

Mixed-faith marriages can have two unexpectedly positive consequences: one is for those involved to rediscover their previously dormant faith, precisely because they have to take responsibility for explaining it to their partner and passing it on to any children.

The other result is that those who discuss in advance how the religious and cultural differences will affect future life together, end up by strengthening their relationship and avoiding many domestic pitfalls into which even same-faith couples can fall.

Rabbi Dr JONATHAN ROMAIN

Maidenhead, Berkshire

Maidenhead, Berkshire

Maidenhead, Berkshire

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Maidenhead, Berkshire

formal sampling, which means that a sample of that size – if, and only if, chosen in appropriate ways – can indeed give an adequate estimate of the numbers in the whole population from which it is drawn who have the characteristics on which data is collected.

JENNIFER PLATT

Professor of Sociology

University of Sussex

Brighton

Brighton

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Brighton

They are time-consuming to put on and, once donned, greatly reduce vision, impair hearing and cause general clumsiness – all crucial matters in an evacuation. I suspect that all very young and many elderly passengers would find them virtually impossible to use in an emergency. I know of nobody in professional aviation who has acquired his own hood to take on flights.

KIERAN DALY

Flight International

Sutton, Surrey

Sutton, Surrey

Sutton, Surrey

Sutton, Surrey

Sutton, Surrey

Sutton, Surrey

Sutton, Surrey

Sutton, Surrey

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Sutton, Surrey

Wild salmon at risk of extinction

Sir: It is estimated that a total of around 300 tons of wild salmon reached the UK market last year, either to be sold fresh or to go for smoking. That compares to landings of farmed fish out of Scotland totalling close to 70,000 tons.

Salmon, fresh and smoked, is becoming something of a Christmas tradition, as is the annual habit of food writers to discourse on the subject. This year there has been an overwhelming chorus from the food pages of most national newspapers that wild salmon is best. "Insist on it in your fishmonger's and restaurant."

This is a debatable point. Certainly a fresh-run salmon is a magnificent work of nature and perhaps a prize for the gourmet. Yet the poor, bruised salmon that has flailed itself to death in a net is much less of a trophy, as is the exhausted fish caught high up the river after weeks of starvation. Wild salmon that reach the market are of variable quality and of course, most will have been frozen, for it is a short season.

Yet this is not the main point. It is far more important to realise that wild salmon are desperately rare. To make a catch of this rarity will certainly seal their terminal decline within three or four years, perhaps less.

The message to the consumer should be to stick with farmed salmon, at least for the time being. Find out as much as you can about the environmental and welfare credentials of the supplier and then go for the best. Generally the quality is very high.

In the long run the proliferation of salmon farming cannot be seen as sustainable. It is too reliant on factory fishing to produce its feeds. The long-term answer is to restore the wild salmon to the huge resource that it once was, and in this the salmon farm industry can play a key role in hatching and releasing wild stock.

This is not pie in the sky. It just needs good organisation and a moratorium on fishing. One major initiative is already under way. There are good grounds for optimism, but it is crucial that we preserve the few remaining wild salmon as the last of the seed corn. Otherwise they are lost for ever.

ANDREW LANE

Loch Fyne Oysters Ltd

Ardsonglass, Argyll

Ardsonglass, Argyll

Ardsonglass, Argyll

Ardsonglass, Argyll

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analysis

The British have been led to believe only they are sceptical about Europe...

"Gramm" says a giant sign silhouetted against the snows of the Rosengarten mountain. Benedikt Gramm, a portly, prosperous fellow, is standing on the ground below. Nearby, Gramm trucks, which have just sped across the Alps, are unloading marmalade and fizzy water. "Whatever people want I can get it for them," he chuckles, boasting that he can supply every German tourist who comes to the South Tyrol with their favourite marmalade for breakfast.

We are talking about European integration. "In principle it is a good thing," he says, somewhat hesitantly as we wander over to the apple-packing warehouse. "Anyway, the intentions are good."

Mr Gramm clearly knows all about the benefits of the single market. "You see, we have always been on a great trading route here," he says, recalling the powerful free-traders of the 18th century, who used to transport spices from Venice, and through the Brenner pass, to Augsburg. Nearby, they are putting apples in packs containing special CO₂ gas, which preserves the Golden Delicious for up to eight months.

And Mr Gramm knows all about integration. The South Tyrol was carved off from Austria and given to Italy at the end of the First World War. It is a bilingual province, with a minority of Italians and a majority German-speaking population. He knows all about the need for open borders too. Mr Gramm is about to head off to Munich (for a Tyrolean craft fair), speeding across the Austrian and German frontiers without so much as a passport check.

With a feather in his Tyrolean hat, Mr Gramm looks like the very model of a modern European citizen who would vote "Yes" to greater union every time. Or would he? As we are talking, news comes in of trouble on the Brenner pass. South Tyrolean dairy farmers are blocking the road in protest over a drop in their milk exports, which they blame on a rising lira caused by following Italy's efforts to join the single currency. "There is a lot of fear of the euro," says Mr Gramm. "And people don't like this Euro-tax at all."

We go to Mr Gramm's office to establish whether any Gramm trucks are stuck in the jam. He says the traffic on the Brenner pass is getting worse.

But across the Continent, people are resisting the rush towards greater integration. They worry about the erosion of local and national differences, and are angry about not being consulted by the pro-Brussels political élite. Sarah Helm reports

I ask whether this might be partly due to the increased number of trucks carrying German marmalade, which are getting stuck alongside increased numbers of tourist buses, carrying the Germans who will eat the marmalade. "No," laughs Mr Gramm. "It is because Europe will not pay for a tunnel under the Brenner pass."

Mr Gramm believes the rights of the farmers must be protected, if local culture and the Alpine environment is to be preserved. And Europe is not helping. The problem is that the Common Agricultural Policy has favoured Bavarian milk producers, and the South Tyrolean mountain farmers are going out of business. Above Mr Gramm is a picture of a South Tyrolean cow munching buttercups in happier times.

At the Dublin summit tomorrow, European heads of government will talk a lot about the need to listen to the concerns of such European "citizens" as Mr Gramm. A draft treaty will be presented entitled: "Adapting the European Union for the benefits of its peoples and preparing it for the future."

And the leaders will try to present the treaty as "user-friendly" by congratulating the drafters on the clarity of the text. They will uphold new proposals on "transparency", which is Euro-jargon for open government.

The draft treaty will also make new proposals for enforcing "subsidiarity", which is Euro-jargon for effective decision-making at the most local level possible. But while making these concessions to the "citizens' needs, the political élite, which is designing Europe's future, will nevertheless take little note of the real fears and doubts of ordinary people.

The British have been led to believe that it is only they who are sceptical towards Europe. In fact, shades of Euro-scepticism can be found right across the continent. In other member states the debate is less confrontational - it is not about "them and us". But opinion polls show that millions of European citizens are confused and fearful about developments in Europe.

An average of just 58 per cent of all European Union citizens think membership of the union is a "good thing". In many countries the figure is far lower. In Sweden, for example, only 22 per cent of people say membership is a good thing, a far lower proportion than in Britain where the figure is about 37 per cent. Curiously, British support for EU membership suddenly went up to 43 per cent last July, in the aftermath of the "beef war".

In Germany and France opinion hovers between 50 per cent and 60 per cent; the biggest supporters of the EU are always found in Luxembourg, where 70 per cent of people like being part of the EU.

6 Grassroots grumbles can be heard on every European street and in every bar

Strikes and protests in France, Belgium, Italy and Greece about austerity measures, taken by their governments ahead of monetary union, have focused attention of the growing fear of the euro. Meanwhile the noises of less specific grassroots grumbles can be heard on every European street and in every European bar. The most common complaints are that European integration is moving "too fast" and that the voice of ordinary people is "not heard".

In France people tend to rail against "les technocrates" of Brussels. "We are European but we don't know what it is," says Marcel Vilro, a shopkeeper in Bordeaux. "Brussels is too far away," is a constant refrain. "Europe is for big business," is another regular complaint. "The ultra-liberals will break Europe," says an Aquitaine mayor. The Danes think Europe is simply interfering in too many policy areas, while a prime concern of the Germans and the

Austrians is the coming of the euro. In Germany people are also fed up that their country has to pay Europe's bills.

Signs of widespread antipathy to European integration can also be measured by the increase in anti-European stories that appear in the Continental press. British newspapers are often accused of writing "Euro-myths" - such as "EU says fishermen to wear hairnets," which recently appeared in the tabloids. Now Continental papers have developed an appetite for such stories. The Finns recently accused Brussels of trying to harmonise the temperature of swimming pools, while the Swedes read a Euro-scare about cat litter regulations.

Throughout the Continent there is a growing cry for greater "regional" input into European government. Alienation from the existing European institutions is bringing calls for more "local" decision-making through a "Europe of the Regions", and a reaffirmation of local cultural identity to counter Brussels harmonisation.

Until the early Nineties the majority of Continental Europeans were largely enthusiastic about Europe. Ordinary people did not understand what their leaders got up to in Brussels. Unlike the British, however, they were ready to accept that integration was for the greater good, and was intended, above all else, to prevent further wars. The Continentals found few reasons to complain, because the political integration that was underway did not impact unduly on everyday life. But with implementation of the single market in the late Eighties, the first serious complaints were heard.

While big business seemed to benefit from new cross-border trade, ordinary people began to feel the impact of integration as multiple regulations on everything from health and safety standards to recipes for marmalade became subject to harmonisation. It was not, however, until 1992, when the Maastricht treaty was signed, that people began to question the value of a union at all.

The impenetrable text, negotiated with almost no public consultation, proved a massive turn-off. The Danish voted "No" to Maastricht in a referendum, and the French only narrowly accepted the treaty. According to Brussels surveys, public support for membership of the EU has barely recovered since Maastricht.

The bureaucrats of Brussels and political leadership in member states argue that public disaffection with the union is easily exaggerated, and is a symptom of economic problems which have nothing to do with "Europe". They fail to

acknowledge, however, that in many countries there is no political voice for the frustration. In Germany 60 per cent of the populace opposes the euro but both main political parties support it.

Nervousness about launching Europe-wide campaigns on either the euro or the new EU treaty show how wary the decision-makers are of public reaction. But the need to secure wider public support for the next round of integration has been acknowledged. Horst Teltschik, who was Helmut Kohl's key adviser during the negotiation of Maastricht, concedes that public opinion was ignored during the 1992 negotiations. "It was crazy to ask people to vote for a treaty that they could not understand. We were too self-confident. We should have explained more than we did," he says today. But Europe is still proving hard to sell. The European Commission has recently launched "Europe by satellite", which allows "the citizens" to tune in to day-to-day developments in Brussels. The problem is that nobody wants to buy the dish.

A "rapid reaction" unit has been set up in the information directorate of the Commission specifically to react to and counter the Euro-myths. But the myths are being spun so fast that the staff find it hard to cope. The European parliament has this year launched a "Europe is what you make it" campaign in every member state, and the socialist group - the largest in the parliament - now puts its policy ideas on the Internet. However, the evidence suggests that knowledge of the way Europe works does not necessarily lead to affection for the union. Danes always score the highest marks when it comes to understanding the process of European government. But today only 45 per cent of Danes think membership of the EU is a good thing.

Even in Germany it is no longer taboo for political figures to attack Europe. Edmund Stoiber, the powerful president of Bavaria, increasingly attacks Brussels in his speeches. "If you criticise Europe you are condemned as a Euro-sceptic. This is unfair," he said at a recent meeting in Brussels. "It must be possible to utter criticism without being condemned as a Euro-sceptic. Europe must be closer to the needs of the citizen."

As Europe heads for a major new round of integration and adoption of the single currency, all the signs are that Continental Europeans such as Mr Gramm in South Tyrol will continue to feel confused by Brussels decision-making.

Mr Gramm feels alienated by Brussels but also senses that he must increasingly answer to Europe's laws. In the apple-packing factory, for example, costly new machinery has been installed to stamp EU-approved sell-by dates. And Brussels now wants hotels to start a census of all tourists, which will be costly and very time-consuming. "These things are not their business," says Mr Gramm.



Meet Santa.

Presents are his speciality.

Like Santa, we will be trying to spread an extra bit of happiness this Christmas.

Midland Bank, Forward Trust, Griffin Credit Services and Swan National have decided not to send Christmas cards to customers this year. Instead, as in 1995, we are donating the money to three worthy causes associated with the true spirit of Christmas.

Normally we spend £75,000 on cards and postage but by donating £25,000 each to Sense, Abbeyfield and Turning Point, we hope to spread a little happiness to somebody else this Christmas.



Midland: pleased to be supporting these charities this Christmas.



Abbeyfield

Where older people find care in housing



Issued by Midland Bank plc.

Compère and contrast: me and the band

This coming Friday I have to go out briefly on the stage of the Queen Elizabeth Hall and initiate the proceedings of a jazz concert which Stan Tracey is giving to mark his 70th birthday. Do a bit of compèring. Chat for a while if there is a hiatus. And already there is a part of me wishing I hadn't said I would do it.

Introducing a jazz concert is not exactly climbing Everest, but it is still one of the most thankless tasks in the world. The people who have turned up to listen to any jazz concert are generally knowledgeable and sensible, so when someone who is clearly not one of the musicians comes through the curtain or shuffles on stage and approaches the mike, the general feeling among the audience is: "Whoever he is, why doesn't he get off and let the musicians on?"

I have had to do this from time to time over the years and, however nice it is to be asked, it is never much fun to do. Someone has got to do it, however, because very few jazz musicians enjoy talking to an audience, and it

helps if someone tries to establish a rapport. I had a conversation once with Chris Pyne, the jazz trombonist, who told me about the time he was asked to join a group called Coe Wheeler & Co.

"They didn't really need a trombonist," he said. "The line-up was fine as it was - trumpet, tenor, rhythm section. So why me? Well, it gradually dawned on me that everyone in the band was very shy. Kenny Wheeler on trumpet. Shy. Tony Coe. Hardly says anything. I think the pianist was John Taylor. Not very forthcoming. Whereas I am quite happy chatting. And it suddenly dawned on me one day that the only real reason I had been asked to join the group was to make the announcements."

Even when you aren't on stage, you can be in trouble. I was once asked to write the programme notes for a Lol Coxhill concert. Lol Coxhill, if you don't know, is a soprano saxophonist who not only likes to play completely unaccompanied (I once came out of a Count Basie concert at the Odeon, Hammersmith, and found



Miles Kington

Coxhill busking, beautifully, on the pavement outside) but has a caustic attitude to any more conventional approaches. Anyway, I attended the concert for which I had written the appreciative notes and was somewhat puzzled when, before he even started playing, Lol pulled a programme out of his pocket and proceeded to read out to the audience every word I had written in a pretend Pseud's Corner kind of voice, making it plain he didn't think as much of it as I did. I didn't think the scorn

was deserved, but then I would say that, wouldn't I?

It isn't much better backstage, because the so-called compère is with musicians with whom he has no artistic right to be mingling. I once got involved in introducing a jazz concert at the Edinburgh Jazz Festival which featured the National Youth Jazz Orchestra and American trumpeter Red Rodney in a tribute to Woody Herman, and I can remember wandering round backstage occasionally trying to talk to the star musicians I was rubbing shoulders with, and finding it difficult because they hadn't the faintest idea who I was. The one moment I remember with great clarity was when the veteran Red Rodney found himself on stage playing against the young British trumpeter in the band, Gerard Presencer, and finding it extremely hard to make any headway against the brilliant youngster.

"My God!" exclaimed Rodney when he came off stage. "Why isn't that young kid out getting girls in trouble, instead of showing me up like that?"

So why did I agree to go and say a few words at Stan Tracey's 70th birthday concert? To get a chance to hear Stan for free, of course. Or rather, to blackmail myself into going. When you live near Bristol, you tend not to go to London for an evening out unless you force yourself to, and although Stan Tracey's piano is still one of the joys of British music, I haven't heard him live for years - or hadn't till last Sunday, when he happened to be in Bristol playing with his Quartet at the Albert. Bristol's great jazz pub. And with him on trumpet he had the very same Gerard Presencer I heard in Edinburgh some 10 years ago, still boyish-looking but a wonderfully mature player now.

The Bristol pub gig was being filmed for HTV. I don't think the BBC or anyone else has any plans to record the QEH concert tomorrow. Maybe London folk are slower off the mark than down here in the West Country. Anyway, if London folk knew their business they should have given him a knighthood by now.

Dr. J. C. P. S.

the commentators

Self-regulation scores a victory in the House

Has the House of Commons done something right for once? There could hardly be a worse time for John Major to lose one of the ablest members of his government. But that isn't really the point. The outcome of the inquiry, the first by the newly formed, post-Nolan Committee on Standards and Privileges, may prove to be at once more important and longer-lasting than the mere fate of a single minister.

David Willetts will probably bounce back in the long term, not least because, unusually and promptly, he resigned yesterday. But there's just a chance that yesterday's brutally succinct report will start to change the culture of the House of Commons. At long last. And for the better.

A unanimous recommendation of the committee is that in future it should hear evidence on oath. If that is accepted – and it should be – it will underpin the authority of the Commons claim to regulate itself. It could, as some Tories were quietly pointing out yesterday, constrain Mohamed Al Fayed if and when he gives evidence on the cash for questions allegations against Neil Hamilton. But it should also encourage MPs not to cover up for themselves – and each other.

There is a human story here. An imaginative political intellectual is propelled, against his natural inclinations, into the introverted cubiness of the whips' office. Never mind that a government not exactly overburdened with articulate thinkers might have found a more useful role for him. It was an appointment that was supposed to "knock him into shape", to give him a taste of low politics and, no doubt, a sense of his own limitations. Perhaps exactly because he isn't a natural whip, he acts the over-eager new boy and does his best to help the willing chairman of a quasi-judicial committee to deal with an embarrassing scandal in a way the Government would like. Or so it looks from a note that he writes for the Chief Whip immediately after a conversation with the Committee chairman, Sir Geoffrey Johnson Smith.

Two years later the note becomes public and Willetts, now a pivotal if middle-ranking minister, denies in evidence to a Select Committee that that's what he was doing, or that it was what Sir Geoffrey wanted him to do. Sir Geoffrey, in evidence, likewise denies that he had been seeking help from the Government. But the committee decides that Willetts' memo was a lot more accurate than either his or, for that matter, Sir Geoffrey's – evidence to the committee. Willetts is severely censured for "dissembling" to the committee.

No one has complained about Sir Geoffrey's conduct to the committee. But the committee makes it clear that neither man should have had the conversation in the first place, and notes with damning politeness that Sir Geoffrey's own oral evidence was "sincere" if "somewhat confused".



Donald Macintyre

Evidence on oath should encourage MPs not to cover up for themselves – and each other

There is more to come. Probably after Christmas it will start to examine the case of Andrew Mitchell, the whip who actually served on the committee, who consulted the Registrar of Members' interests about his assessment of the Hamilton case, and then passed on the information to the Chief Whip with the comment: "Not very helpful. I'm afraid."

In some ways the Mitchell case will be different – and not just because he enjoys more backbench popularity than Willetts, who suffers from what many Tories regard as the vice of cleverness. Also a whip at the time, Mitchell was openly a member of the committee. It's surely indefensible for a whip to be on a backbench committee of the legislature. But not a Labour whip, indeed not a single MP of any party, complained at the time he was appointed. If anyone had objected, his appointment would probably have been blocked. It demonstrates how decadent the custom and practice had become, that no one did. And that's part of what may now start to change.

This report won't stop whips being whips, or oiling the wheels of Select Committees to suit the Government. And cynics will say that it will just make them more careful about getting caught. But it will make them more hesitant about trying to suborn inquiries into complaints about MPs.

As it happens, this inquiry wasn't on a Nolan-type issue. This was the new Standards and Privileges Committee acting not on sleaze but on an old-fashioned issue of parliamentary privilege – interference in the independence of MPs. But because it was the first inquiry by a new committee that will deal with sleaze in the future, it was a critically important test. Dale Campbell Savours, the most experienced inquisitor on the Labour side – and a one-time believer in external regulation – certainly thinks the process worked.

The inquiry might not have found as it did if the Tory Quentin Davies had not transformed the atmosphere by his relentless questioning of Willetts. It's very doubtful whether it would have produced a unanimous report at all if it hadn't first been persuaded to hear evidence not just in public but on television – sharply increasing expectations of the inquiry. But it did.

It's tempting to think that the Conservative majority, in what most people see as the closing month of its party's 17-year regime, suddenly decided to do the right thing – a sort of conversion on the political deathbed.

But it would be fairer to say that with the threat of statutory external regulation hanging over them, the committee finally, belatedly, began to demonstrate that it was capable of putting its house in order.

This has been a messy affair. But the most important lesson from yesterday is a frankly unexpected one: having languished in the last chance saloon, self-regulation might now just work.



Open wide: Olivier and Hoffman, a suitable case for treatment?

My dentist is turning Japanese. Her surgery currently features a spindly viburnum twig in a long blue-glass vase standing on a pedestal, which clients of her fashionable south London practice can contemplate at their leisure, like Shinto devotees inspecting a cherry blossom tree.

Did I say "at their leisure"? What I meant was "to distract them from the screaming agony they are simultaneously enduring". For the plant's function is, of course, therapeutic rather than aesthetic. It's not there to amuse passing horticulturalists. It's to distract you from the knowledge that you're sitting with your mouth bizarrely, and unpleasantly, filled with rubber suction tubes, metal clamps and little plastic hoovers while a brace of ladies you hardly know are leaning over you and hoeing your gums with an ultra-violet cattle-prod.

I haven't had the pleasure for a while. In fact I haven't been near a dentist for five or six years. I've grown used to the gradual organic decay, the carious grooves and crenellations, the unexpected Polo-mint-sized holes and



Chopin: dental distraction

Monument Valley erosions in the cave of one's mouth over the years. But when a whole landscape of grey molar suddenly appeared before me the other night, in an otherwise perfectly acceptable *marzipan* I decided it was time to travel down the Road of Pain once more.

I couldn't believe how much had changed. It used to be so brutally simple. Once you sat for 20 minutes in a hushed ante-chamber that smelt of Mr Sheen and old copies of *Horse & Hound*,

until your name was called by a sad-eyed matron – the sort who in bygone times would have been found robbing corpses in a Dickens novel – who led you to a room reeking of cloves and zinc oxide, where a genial and bearded Australian would attack you with a drill and make you drink some effervescent pink antiseptic, while you stared unhappily at a blank wall.

Now look what you get: the waiting room is full of piped Dvorak, there's an educational jigsaw on the table and some copies of the new-style *Punch* on the chair in a burst of post-modernist ("You must be in a dentist's waiting room", right?) irony. In the surgery, the dentist is a smiling, auntie-like figure with a *batterie de cuisine* that includes plaque guns and light-sensitive filling-hardeners. Sit up on the reclining chair and you're given an array of carved wooden African trucks and diggers to look at. Recline on the reclining chair, and you're staring at an aerial view of Dulwich, the idea being that, in trying to identify your back garden, you will fail to notice that a particularly jangly dental nerve is about to be cauterised with pith and tar. Should a filling be required, they plunk a Sony Walkman over your ears and turn it up until the cacophony of excavation is briefly drowned by Vladimir Ashkenazy playing Chopin waltzes *fortissimo*. Should a major filling be required, they give you a pair of perspex goggles to shield you from bits of flying amalgam. And there you sit, a torture victim on sensory overload, your mouth, eyes, ears and nose simultaneously assailed. It's surprising they don't give you something to do with your hands to complete the set. Modelling clay? Worry beads?

There's a lot of new thinking about patient relaxation. "I was told by a personable Scot at the British Dental Association. 'It's to reassure people who are still scared of dentists. Some surgeries even give you virtual reality headsets while your teeth are being worked on, but since they cost £1,500 each, it's early days.' Intrigued, I did some research of my own, and found a chap

in Mill Hill who offers patients giant spectacles on which they can watch videos – mostly soothing stuff, such as great golfing moments or (a favourite, apparently) Delia Smith explaining how to make *beef en daube*. But he told me, patients had the option of bringing their own favourite movies along. Jolly good. Where did I put my copy of *Marathon Man*? Can you still rent *Driller Killer*?

And Nicholas Soames told the House of Commons that ministers had not deliberately mycelled Parliament over the use of dangerous pesticides in the Gulf War. "said the lady newscaster, reading the 8pm bulletin on Greater London Radio on Tuesday night. 'Mycelled?' Oh I see, *mistled*. Poor thing, she had momentarily suffered that curious form of word-blindness that affects everyone from time to time, when a familiar arrangement of letters refuses to divulge the word it purports to represent. Personally, I've always had a problem with 'sweet-thart' and 'noo-shoon', which is how I read the words *sweetheart* and *newshound*. And a quick straw poll reveals that one or two (non-dyslexic) colleagues have always had trouble with 'drorits' and 'kway', which is how they always read the words *drugs* and *quay*. So it is hardly fair for me to criticise another's momentary lapse. I am just as guilty. I have no alibi.

The news that *Health & Efficiency* magazine faces closure left a curious pang somewhere in the memory banks. I haven't seen the thing for all of 30 years, but what a curious production it was. The title, for one thing, seemed a little off-target for a nude magazine. (*Efficiency*? *Efficiency* at what?) And the unpersuasive whiff of the trade mag (as in *Transport & General Workers' Union Magazine*). But the content was far odder. It was in these pages that a whole generation of nervous Catholic youths at my severely Jesuit school first glimpsed naked female flesh – and couldn't work out what

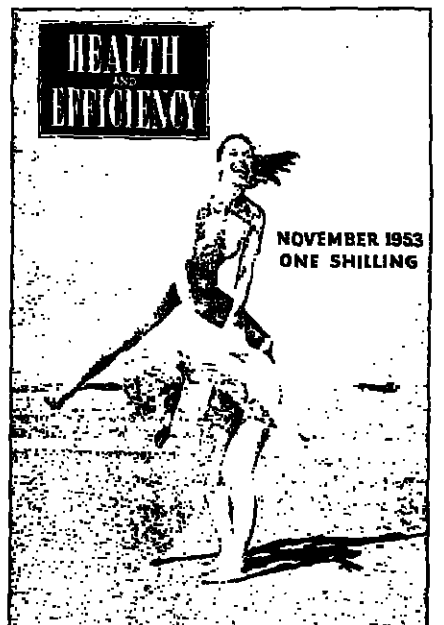
An earful of Chopin, an eyeful of soothing video, and a mouthful of cattle-prod. Ah, the pleasures of a visit to the dentist

john walsh

possible connection its owners had with sex. All these abstracted-looking dames, standing around on sea shores or languidly playing volleyball, seemed far more attuned to the bracing properties of ozone than to the lore of the boudoir. Even their spectacular chests, at which we gazed in simple wonder, seemed strangely disembodied, as if they'd been borrowed for the day. And, given the prevailing rules about the airbrushing of pubic hair, well, it turned us all into little Ruskins. (Armpits too.)

All this reminiscence started getting to me. I simply had to find a copy of the final issue before it went, er, belly-up. But there was no sign of it in *Brad*, the index of the nation's magazines. H&E's proprietor, Peenhill Ltd, was raided by the porn squad some months ago and their London phone number is "not recognised". So I finally went to the newsagent at Canary Wharf and asked for it.

"Health magazine, is it?" No, I said, in a serious, journalist-at-work voice. It's a naturism magazine. Nudism, that sort of thing. Quite famous, once. Going out of business. I'm doing a story on it, you see. For a paper. Very much a matter of research. Oh yes. The newsagent regarded me steadily. "We're not allowed to sell magazines like that," he said. "But the nearest thing I can offer you is probably *Videa*



Healthy stuff for growing boys

Students must pay for their privileges

Tonight the governors of the London School of Economics have the chance to start weaning the universities off Welfare State junk food – and to confront the parents of children likely to enter higher education in the new century, myself among them, with a hard truth. The market rate for excellence is higher than that which we are currently paying.

The LSE's governors are being asked to approve a contingency plan for charging British undergraduates a "top-up" fee, probably of the order of £1,000 a year, and payable, at the earliest, by the class of autumn 1998.

If the LSE acts, even if it only asserts the principle that students have to pay in order to sustain top-flight institutions, at least half-a-dozen others will move in step. This would present whoever gets elected next year with a fait accompli. Things would be messy for a while as graduate recruiters, students, their parents and bankers sorted themselves out. But faced by the universities of Birmingham, Leeds and Manchester, and London's University College, Imperial and King's all intent on charging extra, the government of the day would quickly move to establish an orderly plan. There are several well-crafted student loan schemes around.

The expansion of higher education in recent years has been paid for by the Government on the basis of reducing the amount of public money per student. The system has proved a lot more elastic than anyone might have guessed, but the issue for the top colleges has now become escape from subsidised mediocrity.

If the LSE and its kind are to enter the new century as autonomous, free-standing institutions, they will have to charge fees (and build an apparatus of scholarships and bursaries to go with them). This is not just about money. By saying yes to fees, the LSE would restate the importance of academic autonomy – from financial freedom comes the freedom to think. The school's founders, Sidney and Beatrice Webb, may in later life have been

The London School of Economics may tonight agree in principle to start charging fees. And why not, asks David Walker, if British universities are to halt falling standards

enamoured of the Soviet Union but they never intended the LSE to be an organ of the British State.

Nor was it intended to become a kind of up-market finishing school for Americans and other foreigners. Nothing wrong with them, of course, paying full fees at £8,500 a throw; and yet the LSE cannot admit the British students it wants because, it says, they don't bring in enough to keep the institution running.

Not even the Government pretends that higher education's sums add up. To sustain quality – repairing buildings, stocking libraries and giving academics the time to think – simply costs too much. More money for higher education, let alone its expansion, is not a priority compared with nursery programmes and qualitative improvements in secondary schools. Nor should it be.

The LSE cannot be saved by further squeezing the likes of the Universities of Luton and Sunderland, Bath College of Higher Education and the former polytechnics. These may have been ensnared in a high-cost regime, and their destinies may lie in their evolution as explicitly lower-cost local or regional colleges; but there is no denying that the higher education system as a whole needs more money if its strengths are to be preserved and extra numbers of students accommodated.

Two weeks ago, the Association of University Teachers took to the streets to agitate for more pay. It was a paltry action, which went largely unnoticed. Dons' salvation from penury lies in their own hands. To pay professors properly requires universities to charge. Thanks to them, graduates earn consistently more than non-graduates, and could afford to repay fees after graduation.

A new balance has to be struck between personal and public contributions to the cost of gaining a higher education credential. But what about the candle-lit vigils that the National Union of Students has promised outside tonight's meeting, and its fears about LSE's proposal skewing access to the offspring of the better off? Writing on this page six months ago, one of the LSE's governors, the ostensibly New Labour MP Margaret Hodge, came over all Old Labour to bemoan what she called "elitism". This is a red herring: in full-cost America, access is less socially-biased than in the United Kingdom.

The official mantra is: let's wait for Sir Ron Dearing, the businessman who is chairing an official committee on the future of higher education, due to report in the summer. But the day after Sir Ron's committee concludes, the financial facts of academic life will be exactly as they are now. The LSE ought to lead by example. There is only one way forward for an institution keen to protect its reputation, keen to attract world-class scholars (and paying salaries at world-class levels). The way forward is fees.

I always knew sport was bad for your character

Good character, discipline and commitment were what the Victorians thought sports gave you. Permanent chilblains, inferiority complexes and bad behaviour are what they in fact achieve.

A paper in today's *British Journal of Sports Medicine* disproves the commonly held belief that doing sport prevents teenagers from turning into juvenile delinquents.

Rather, it seems, the reverse is true. Boys who do a lot of sport at the age of 15 are almost twice as likely to be delinquent by the age of 18 than those who don't, and girls are even more likely to go off the rails.

The researchers claim that it is more true of individual than of team sports. I disagree, as anyone who would have stood on a freezing cold football court in a skimpy gym skirt, biting back tears because you and the class fatty have been picked last again. Reader, giving up sport as soon as humanly possible is the only reason I now consider myself to be a useful member of society. Had I not, I would no doubt be spending my time setting fire to buildings or extorting lunch money from small children.

Sport is responsible for all the nasty, mean, delinquent facets of the average schoolgirl's character. It first imbued me with an unjustified prejudice against long-limbed girls with blond manes who effortlessly made the tennis, hockey and athletics teams as well as being voted *form captain* on the strength of these achievements.

It taught me to dissimulate – faking another sprained ankle and having to retire to the

showers early. It taught me to lie (my period came round approximately every 10 days), to cheat (Round the field five times? Run very slowly and you can get away with going round twice), and to value sloth above all other deadly sins.

I think the happiest day of my sports career was when a particularly unsympathetic teacher sent us losers out to practise archery in the cold. Some fellow incompetent managed for the first time to execute a perfect shot – through the staffroom window above. (Sadly there were no fatal injuries, but I still nominated her for form captain.)

Giving up sport in the sixth form freed me from all this. I felt I could even speak civilly to games teachers when they no longer had the power to make me jump potently over a metal rail. And I could occupy my leisure time in useful pursuits such as helping old people, reading, and eating chocolate, instead of subjecting myself to ritual humiliation in the name of bonding, character-building and stiff upper lips.

The researchers who produced the report note that in the mid-19th century sport became a form of social control in public schools and "was considered a substitute for poaching, vandalism, bullying and drunkenness, which had previously been the main activities during boys' leisure time". Look at the public schoolboys who run our country today. Don't you feel that poaching must have been a morally uplifting pursuit in comparison?

Glenda Cooper

Send a baby box to Bosnia this winter

Disinfectant, nappies, washing materials – not what you'd think of giving someone. But for an impoverished mother in Bosnia trying to keep her child safe from infection, the basic essentials inside one of our baby boxes would mean the world.

Children's Aid Direct will deliver your box directly into the hands of mothers in Bosnia – many of whom will be living in war-damaged housing in very basic conditions this winter.

Please send a baby box to Bosnia this winter – and help a mother keep her baby safe.

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Please send _____ baby box(es) at £30 each on my behalf.

I enclose a cheque for £ _____ (total amount) made payable to Children's Aid Direct

OR please debit £ _____ from my ☐ Visa ☐ Access ☐ Switch

Card number _____

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Expiry date _____ Signature _____

Name (surnames) _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

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If you would like to send a message to a Bosnian mother, please send it with your donation and we will put it in your baby box. Please send the Children's Aid Direct.

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Leap in cost of calls to mobiles provokes fury

Chris Godsmark
Business Correspondent

The Consumers Association yesterday reacted furiously to news that the cost of making a call from conventional phones to Orange and One2One mobile phones would more than double soon after the new year.

The unexpected blow to consumers is due to Orange and One2One sharply increasing the charges they levy for transmitting calls from BT's land lines across the airwaves to mobile phone users.

Orange, which was formed through a joint venture between British Aerospace and Hutchison Whampoa, and One2One, which is owned by Mercury, are increasing the charges to BT to close the price gap with more expensive rivals - Vodafone and Cellnet.

The price hike, which will take effect in February, will see the cost of making a one-minute daytime call from a BT phone to an Orange or One2One handset on weekdays leap from 16.7p to possibly as much as 30p. The price of an evening call could go up from 9.85p to 20p. Weekend calls, though, would probably stay at the same price.

Both Orange and One2One are currently believed to be making a loss on incoming calls from the BT network, but feel that the competitive charges were one way of enticing customers away from rivals.

The increase will bring the two networks' price structure for incoming calls much closer into line with Cellnet and Vodafone. Calls made from BT to these two operators have come down recently after pressure from the industry watchdog, Ofcom, but still cost 37.5p a minute at peak times and 25p during weekday evenings.

The Consumers Association, which has been severely critical of some of the marketing practices adopted by the industry, slammed the price increases. Philip Cullum, the Consumer Association's policy manager, said the price differential between the rival operators should have been reduced through big cuts in Cellnet and Vodafone charges, and not with increases in Orange and One2One charges.

"We would obviously be very concerned if prices were going up just after people bought their phones over Christmas. It's an industry which has grown fast

on the back of fairly dubious selling techniques."

Many consumers are already unaware that it costs much more to make a call to a mobile phone from the BT network than it does to make an ordinary local or long-distance call. This is because the mobile company charges BT to connect the call over its airwaves. The bill for this service is then passed on by BT to its own customers, plus the cost of the local call connection and additional profit.

BT declined to comment on the figures, though it is believed that this internal charge that the two networks make to the company for weekday calls is to rise dramatically from 7.3p a minute to more than 15p a minute. The charge for evening and night-time calls made during the week would rise from around 5p a minute to as much as 12p.

Discussions are still going on between BT and Orange and One2One, though one of the two operators is already thought to have formally agreed the new price regime.

Asked about the increases last night a spokesman for BT explained: "We can confirm that we have been approached by the two PCN operators, Or-



Closing the gap: Hans Snook, managing director of Orange, is competing with the company's more expensive rivals

ange and One2One, who are both requesting higher payments for calls our customers make to their networks. Any increase would obviously result in higher retail prices for our customers, which we would regret."

However, Orange insisted even after any price rise it would still be more competitive for incoming calls: "It remains the case that it is substantially cheaper to call an Orange or One2One phone than it is to call

a Cellnet or Vodafone customer."

Despite its objections, BT is not believed to have made a complaint about the increase to Ofcom. Industry observers cynically pointed out that the move by Orange and One2One would make the Cellnet network, in which BT has a 60 per cent stake, look more attractive. Ofcom is also likely to attract controversy because it is thought to have agreed to the price rises.

400,000 callers besiege Halifax

Peter Rodgers
Financial Editor

Halifax Building Society has had 400,000 callers to its helpline in the last few days, many of them querying details of the share allocations they are to receive in next year's flotation.

The flood of inquiries, which at times led to long queues of callers at the switchboard, is in response to a mailing of 11 million letters to members giving individual details of bonus entitlements and checking account records.

A Halifax spokeswoman denied reports that the calls were from furious customers who have been told wrongly they are not eligible for share bonuses averaging £1,000 a head.

"Whether they are furious is another matter. We have had a lot of basic inquiries seeking reassurances or more information, or volunteering further information," she added.

Halifax was aware that there might be some discrepancies in the account details mailed to customers and "we want to be sure our understanding is the same as theirs".

For example, some callers had several accounts opened in different years, and the details of the address on one of the accounts - such as a house name - might differ.

The computer would read this as belonging to a separate member and the mailing was to allow such discrepancies to be eliminated.

"With more than 11 million going out, to have 400,000 telephone calls is not a huge proportion," said Halifax.

One common complaint appears to be that the information in Halifax documents on how much must be retained in an account to qualify for the bonus shares is not clear.

"I was on the phone to the Halifax for 20 minutes trying to get this sorted out," an angry caller told *The Independent*.

Meanwhile, Halifax said it was appointing Greville Fildes, former head of the building society and estate agency subsidiary, as deputy chief executive. James Crosby is to be financial services and insurance director. Mike Ellis is to head banking and savings and John Lee will run personnel and services.

Shares slide as markets get jittery

Diane Coyle
in London
and David Osborne
in New York

A flurry of rumours sweeping up and down Wall Street sent share prices tumbling on both sides of the Atlantic yesterday. The drama confirmed that investors' nerves have been stretched to breaking point by the US stock market's record-breaking climb.

"I think some professional money managers are scared out of their minds right now," said Michael Metz, chief strategist at Wall Street investment firm Oppenheimer & Co.

Richard Kersley, at BZW in London, said: "The degree of nervousness around is reflected in how sharply the market fell today. The last few days have been very volatile."

In a dizzying roller-coaster, the Dow Jones index tumbled 90 points in the first 15 minutes of trading yesterday. By mid-morning it had recovered slightly but was later 116 points down at 6,357.15.

Treasury bonds fell more than a point, taking the long-term interest rate well above the psychologically important 6.5 barrier.

The New York Stock Exchange's limits on automatic trading were triggered for the fourth time in five days. Last Friday saw a steep fall after Alan Greenspan, Federal Reserve chairman, criticised the market's "irrational exuberance".

In London the FTSE 100 index ended more than 53 points lower at 3,982.5. Shares in London have tended to react more negatively than Wall Street to recent upsets.

One of the several apparently unfounded rumours that triggered the fall when the US market opened was a report that Abby Joseph Cohen, co-

chairman of the investment committee at Goldman Sachs, had turned negative on the market. She has been one of the more notable optimists, arguing that better inflation and growth prospects warranted further increases in share prices.

A separate tremor was caused by a report in the *Wall Street Journal* that another Goldman Sachs executive, Robert Hormatz, was predicting that purchases of shares by Japanese investment institutions would dry up. Foreign purchases have been propping up the US Treasury bond market in recent months, and the Japanese have been particularly heavy buyers due to their government's two-year campaign to reduce the value of the yen.

That report sent bond prices sharply lower and prompted a fall in the dollar against the yen. It ended one yen lower in European trading at ¥112.9, and continued to slide in New York.

Mark Brown, a strategist at brokers Hoare Govett, said: "When you see markets react in such an extreme way to small pieces of information, they are very vulnerable."

News of a surge in energy prices, giving a higher-than-expected increase in prices at the factory gate last month, contributed to the turmoil. That the "core" measure, excluding energy and food, barely increased did little to soothe traders.

"This was a relatively favourable report," commented Michael Niemera of the New York branch of the Bank of Tokyo. Mr Niemera is among the majority of New York analysts who remain confident that the Fed will resist the temptation to raise US interest rates in the near future in spite of Mr Greenspan's concerns about a bubble in the markets.

Market Report, page 24

Ronson makes £100m property comeback

Magnus Grimond

Gerald Ronson, who spent six months in jail as a result of his involvement in the Guinness scandal, set the seal on his corporate rehabilitation yesterday with the announcement of a £100m property programme by his Heron International group.

The company is to sink the money into four city centre projects in London, Madrid and Barcelona over the next two years or so. Finance for the developments will be provided by Deutsche Pfandbrief and Hypothekbank, United Bank of Kuwait and Banco Santander. Scottish Amicable, the fund manager, is also involved. The news represents a remarkable come-back for Mr Ronson, whose conviction for theft, conspiracy and false accounting was upheld by the Court of Appeal in London a year ago. He, along with Ernest Saunders, the former Guinness chairman, Jack J. Fildes, a financier, and stockbroker Anthony Farnes, were all found guilty of involvement in an illegal share support scheme which paid out guarantees and "success fees" in return for help in boosting Guinness's

share price in the £2.5bn takeover battle for Distillers. Mr Ronson's fall from grace was compounded in 1995 by the collapse under debt of his own Heron International, which he had built into Britain's second-largest private company, on the back of astute property deals and businesses ranging from Suzuki car and motorcycle distribution to one of the UK's largest chains of independently-owned petrol stations.

Shaftesbury, the property company, has agreed to buy the Carnaby Estate of properties in London for £90m. The estate comprises 91 freehold buildings, one leasehold building and a site in and around Carnaby Street in the West End of London.

The group was bailed out in a controversial £142m takeover by a US investor group led by Steven Green, the man behind Samsonite suitcases. HNV Acquisition, the acquisition vehicle, was backed by Rupert Murdoch and family trusts of Michael Milken, the Wall Street financier who more or less invented junk bonds, was criticised for its decision to keep on Mr Ronson as chief executive with a pay deal worth £5m over five years.

Shaftesbury's portfolio, including 122 shops and restaurants, is in the Fitzrovia, Covent Garden and Carnaby Street areas. Shaftesbury is part-funding the deal through an underwritten £36.5m, three-for-eight rights issue pitched at 137p per share.

Following the failure, Heron sold off most of its trading subsidiaries to concentrate on property, but this is the first big deal to emerge. Mr Ronson said yesterday the new property ventures marked a step forward in Heron's objective of building one of Europe's leading property groups.

Three of the schemes are mixed office and retail in the Strand and Tottenham Court Road in London and Paseo de Gracia in Barcelona. The fourth scheme, in Calle Raimundo Fernandez Villaverde in Madrid, is residential. The Strand development was acquired from Scottish Amicable, which is retaining a stake.

One common complaint appears to be that the information in Halifax documents on how much must be retained in an account to qualify for the bonus shares is not clear. "I was on the phone to the Halifax for 20 minutes trying to get this sorted out," an angry caller told *The Independent*. Meanwhile, Halifax said it was appointing Greville Fildes, former head of the building society and estate agency subsidiary, as deputy chief executive. James Crosby is to be financial services and insurance director. Mike Ellis is to head banking and savings and John Lee will run personnel and services.

Britain 'lagging in investment'

Diane Coyle
Economics Editor

Britain's investment performance has been weaker than that of its main competitors and means the average British employee is working with less capital equipment than the average Taiwanese, according to a new report.

The Government's claim that British industry compares well with other industrial economies, made in its competitiveness White Paper in June, is strongly challenged in a joint report from the Machine Tool Technologies Association and Oxford Economic Forecasting. They present figures showing that the share of investment in GDP is lower in the UK than elsewhere, and that spending on research and development is lower too.

The report also shows that the accumulation of a dismal investment performance over the years means the amount of capital per worker in the UK - the plant and equipment each person has to work with - is less than half the German level, lower than in Taiwan and not much better than in Korea.

It concludes that the British



problem is therefore not just a matter of a low investment share keeping trend growth low, the usual diagnosis. It is also that investment has not been high enough to raise the level of capital per worker to the international norm. "Our living standards continue to lag behind," it says. The White Paper's comparison of the share of business investment in GDP in the UK and other countries is criticised as misleading. These figures show Britain on a par with Germany and France and ahead of the US.

However, the new report

points out that contracting out by the UK government has boosted that particular figure. In addition the exchange rates used to make the comparison flatter the UK at the expense of the other countries.

Comparing a broader measure of investment shares, such as total public and private investment in machinery and equipment, shows the UK lagging behind all its major competitors.

Malcolm Taylor, president of the MITA, presented its conclusions to William Waldegrave, chief secretary to the Treasury, yesterday. Mr Taylor said: "Investment, especially investment in technology, is vital to our future prosperity."

After the discussion, Mr Waldegrave said: "In setting the right climate of low inflation and steady growth, the Government's economic policies are encouraging business to expand and invest with confidence."

Mr Taylor said the association had been concerned for some time about the UK's poor performance compared with other nations, and especially about the absence of any action to encourage innovation.

ICS backs founder threatened with ban

Magnus Grimond

Peter Hall, chairman of Industrial Control Services, yesterday won the backing of his company against official moves to disqualify him as a director.

Mr Hall was a non-executive director of Team Lotus, builders of the Formula 1 cars of the same name, until the company crashed just over two years ago. Last September, the Department of Trade and Industry issued proceedings against Mr Hall and five other former Lotus directors under section six of the Disqualification of Company Directors Act 1986.

The others are Peter Timothy Collins, James Anthony McDougall, Peter Godfrey Wright and Alan George Curtis. If the civil proceedings succeed, they could face disqualification periods of between two and 15 years.

But a statement yesterday from Industrial Control, an electronic safety products company founded by Mr Hall in

1966, said that, after taking legal advice, he believed he had a strong defence to the action and would be defending the case vigorously. "The board of ICS is appraised of the situation and is fully supportive of Peter Hall," the company added.

Mr Hall was unavailable for comment yesterday, but Deirdre Walker of his solicitors Norton Rose said Nigel Davis, a QC, had advised that he had a very strong case. No date for a trial had been set, but they were keen to get on with it as quickly as possible, she added.

TLL Continuation was incorporated in November 1989 and went into administration in September 1994. It has no connection with Team Lotus Holdings, subsequently established by David Hunt, brother of racing driver James Hunt, to continue the marque.

The directors of TLL Continuation are thought to have blamed lack of sponsorship for the demise of the company.

Costain chief set to collect £360,000 payoff

Patrick Toohy

Alan Lovell, chief executive of Costain, is in line for a £360,000 pay-off when he quits the troubled international engineering and construction group, it emerged last night.

The pay-off, which excludes any pension entitlements, is bound to fuel the corporate governance debate about rewarding directors for failure. Since Mr Lovell joined as finance director in 1993 Costain has run up losses totalling £323m and seen the value of its shares collapse from over 400p to just 46p, the price at which they have been suspended since last month pending another clarification of the company's financial position.

On Tuesday Costain said it was "appropriate" for Mr Lovell to resign as chief executive after announcing the sale for £52m of its US coal and London property interests. The news came as Costain issued yet another profits warning.

Mr Lovell said he had agreed to stay on until a successor has been appointed. He is entitled to the compensation package under the terms of a two-year rolling contract. Last year he was paid an annual salary of £180,000.

Mr Lovell angered shareholders in the summer when he warned that Costain would have to go into receivership unless they accepted a £73m rescue refinancing that left Iairia, a Malaysian building group, with a 40 per cent stake.

STOCK MARKETS					
Index	Close	Day's change	Change (%)	1996 High	1996 Low
FTSE 100	3982.50	-53.20	-1.3	4073.10	3832.30
FTSE 250	4396.80	-45.10	-1.0	4568.60	4015.30
FTSE 350	1978.70	-25.20	-1.3	2022.10	1816.60
FTSE SmallCap	2137.42	-7.46	-0.3	2244.26	1954.06
FTSE All-Share	1951.14	-23.48	-1.2	1994.54	1791.35
New York	6381.37	-91.88	-1.4	6547.79	5032.94
Tokyo	20568.38	-253.74	-1.2	22686.80	19734.70
Hong Kong	13188.60	-152.86	-1.1	13530.95	10204.87
Frankfurt	2841.05	-49.95	-1.7	2909.91	2253.36

Source: FT Information

INTEREST RATES					
Short sterling		UK medium gilt		US long bond	
Rate	Yield	Rate	Yield	Rate	Yield
3 Month	5.50	5 Year	7.50	30 Year	7.50
6 Month	5.50	10 Year	7.50	10 Year	7.50
1 Year	5.50	15 Year	7.50	5 Year	7.50
2 Year	5.50	20 Year	7.50	1 Year	7.50
3 Year	5.50	25 Year	7.50	6 Month	7.50
4 Year	5.50	30 Year	7.50	3 Month	7.50
5 Year	5.50	35 Year	7.50	1 Month	7.50

CURRENCIES					
Index	Close	Day's change	Change (%)	1996 High	1996 Low
£/\$	1.6474	+0.0072	+0.44	1.6525	1.6325
£/DM	1.6475	-2.80c	-0.17	1.6540	1.6325
£/¥	164.75	-2.80c	-0.17	165.40	163.25
DM/\$	1.6475	-2.80c	-0.17	1.6540	1.6325
¥/\$	164.75	-2.80c	-0.17	165.40	163.25
DM/£	1.6475	-2.80c	-0.17	1.6540	1.6325
¥/£	164.75	-2.80c	-0.17	165.40	163.25

John 100 200

Taking Stock

☐ **Kenmare Resources** jumped 2p to 27.25p in brisk trade on hopes of a big gold find in Mozambique.

100

Sched.		Time		Channel		Program		Rating	
Day	Time	Ch	Time	Ch	Time	Ch	Time	Ch	Time
MON	10:00	10	10:00	10	10:00	10	10:00	10	10:00
TUE	10:00	10	10:00	10	10:00	10	10:00	10	10:00
WED	10:00	10	10:00	10	10:00	10	10:00	10	10:00
THU	10:00	10	10:00	10	10:00	10	10:00	10	10:00
FRI	10:00	10	10:00	10	10:00	10	10:00	10	10:00
SAT	10:00	10	10:00	10	10:00	10	10:00	10	10:00
SUN	10:00	10	10:00	10	10:00	10	10:00	10	10:00

Wicker ahead

July 10 1956

Paper-thin margins at David Smith

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY TOM STEVENSON

David S Smith, the corrugated paper to office supplies group, has done well in an unimpressive sector over the years. But now even it has succumbed to the extraordinary turbulence the industry has faced since 1994.

Yesterday's 7p fall in the shares to 299.5p came after the group warned it would be hit by the combination of the high sterling exchange rate and flat European economies, to which around half Smith's business is exposed. Profits will dive in the second half, the group warned, and the bad times could extend into next year.

The warning overshadowed interim results which showed profits edging down from £59.6m to £58.6m in the six months to 2 November. The figures were hit by falling paper prices and, more importantly, their margin over waste paper, a key raw material for Smith, which has been on a downward trend since last year's peak. The squeeze exerted by sluggish continental economies is being exacerbated by the pound's strength since August. This is giving European rivals a financial incentive to flood the UK. Smith chief executive Peter Williams reckons imported recycled grades for corrugated board have captured about 20 per cent of the home market.

Given European capacity increases coming on stream totalling around 4 per cent, sentiment is not going to improve until the second half of 1997. But the decision to raise the interim dividend by 6.1 per cent to 2.6p reflects the group's underlying optimism. Mr Williams points to rising corrugated production and, more significantly, demand in Europe,

which is up 6 per cent in the third quarter of 1996.

Paper, mainly the St Regis business, is now down to just 27 per cent of Smith's sales and the much bigger packaging division is said to be doing well. But both this business and Spicers, which dominates UK office supplies wholesaling, are still suffering from intense competition. Beyond that, any strengthening of the pound above 2.60 marks would start to hurt Smith badly, while the effect of the recent strikes in France remains unquantifiable. Brokers have eased forecasts to somewhat below £110m, putting the shares on a prospective multiple of 11. Certain directors sold at well above 300p in the autumn. Others should wait until the uncertainty clears before buying again.

NFC clear-out pays dividends

Since becoming chairman two years ago, Sir Christopher Bland has presided over a wholesale clear-out of directors at NFC, the Exel Logistics and Pickfords transport group. Out went all but one of the old guard; in came a new management team led by chief executive Gerry Murphy to attack a bloated cost base and weed out underperforming businesses.

Yesterday Sir Christopher was in no doubt the often painful and expensive turnaround process was beginning to bear fruits and he was right to boast that for the first time the company was "delivering a proper set of results".

The headline figures make impressive reading. In the year to September, pre-tax profits before exceptional items rose by 39 per cent to £105.7m on sales 12 per cent higher at £2.46bn. Underlying turnover rose by a more pedestrian 5 per cent. The maintained dividend of 7.1p was covered by pre-exceptional earnings of 9.3p (6.5p).

In the light of that performance it was telling that the shares, which have outperformed the market by 14 per cent this year, fell 5p to 175p. The problem appears to be that some of the businesses which almost brought NFC to its knees remain in the portfolio. NFC is still lumbered with the late Eighties legacy of a failed attempt to build a pan-European distribution system.

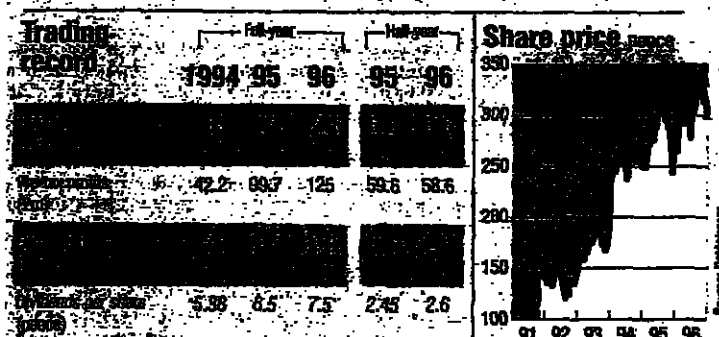
In Sir Christopher's succinct assessment: "We bought a chit of lousy businesses. We can't exit bad businesses so we must turn them around."

Although losses in Europe narrowed to £8.5m from £10.1m on sales of £373m, the network logistics business is having a torrid time, especially in France, where the cost of creating an integrated national network continues to cause headaches.

Broker UBS trimmed its 1997 pre-tax forecast by £3m to £122m to take account of sterling's recent strength against the dollar – north America is almost a third of sales – and the cost of the French lorry drivers' strike. NFC expects to complete its £30m restructuring programme this year, but the next, and more difficult task, will be to grow the business in what it admits are "challenging market conditions". The prospective p/e rating of 16 looks generous given these uncertainties. High enough.

David S Smith: at a glance

Market value: £944m, share price 299.5p



Cider sales still fizz for Bulmer

If proof was needed that the problems round at Matthew Clark were of the 'Buntin cider maker's own doing, half-year figures from rival HP Bulmer provided it. Despite Clark's protestations earlier in the summer that the rapid growth of alcopops had knocked the cider market for six, Bulmer's 8 per cent profit increase in the six months to October suggested otherwise.

The key difference between the two companies lies in their approach to managing brands. Bulmer, under former marketing man John Rudgard, has put its faith, along with most of the drinks industry, in investing heavily in brand-building and it plans a big pre-Christmas press and poster offensive.

Matthew Clark has taken the opposite tack, one it appears to have realised was misguided, by cutting back on advertising and attempting to boost volumes by selling its Oldie English and Blackthorn ciders at a marked

discount to its rivals. Bulmer provided clear evidence yesterday that that approach had failed.

While volumes in the take-home trade have grown by 17 per cent over the past 12 months on average, Bulmer's brands are 42 per cent ahead. In the more difficult on-trade, where nitroking beers are a stiff challenge, Bulmer's 3 per cent volume decline was better than the market's 5 per cent fall.

Against that backdrop, profits of £17.4m, up 8.4 per cent, were in line with expectations. Earnings per share rose 9 per cent to 21.1p and the dividend rose 8 per cent to 4.9p.

The key issue moving into the second half, which includes the crucial Christmas period, is pricing. Bulmer has already signalled a 5 per cent increase, similar to the rise it failed to make stick last year. If it can do so, then rising volumes at home, better prices and early signs of success in its overseas expansion strategy augur well.

Expected profits of about £30m this year and £33m next time put the shares, down 2.5p to 545p, on a p/e ratio of 15 falling to 13. About right.

Greene King to close brewery in £14m revamp

Tom Stevenson

Greene King, the Bury St Edmunds-based brewer of IPA and Abbot Ale, is to shut its Biggleswade brewery at the cost of 132 jobs unless it can sell the site as a going concern. The shutdown was announced yesterday as part of restructuring of the Suffolk company's brewing operation that will result in a £14m charge being taken against full-year results.

The package of changes, which also includes three distribution depot closures, accompanied half-year results which showed a 38 per cent rise in pre-exceptional profits for the 24 weeks to October. It is part of a focus on Greene King's core ales, which now also include Wexford Irish Cream Ale, and its fast-growing retail estate, where new concepts such as Ale Cafe and Hungry Horse are being rolled out.

The closure of Biggleswade means that brewery's distribution site will also close, along with others at Norwich and Farnham. Tim Bridge, chief executive, said the job losses would be more than offset by the creation of 300 new jobs in its retail arm this year, followed by a similar number next year.

Greene King's profits were boosted by a first time contribution from the Magic Pub company, which was included for 15 weeks in the first-half

result. The acquisition of Magic, for £200m in July, took Greene King's pub estate to more than 1,100 and means the company now makes more than half its profits from retailing.

Mr Bridge said he was pleased with the acquisition, which made a £70m fortune for founder Michael Cannon, but represented only £700,000 a pub, low by the standards of recent pub chain deals.

Including the Magic contribution, sales jumped 41 per cent in the period from £76.1m to £107.6m. Trading profit was more than 50 per cent better at £20.4m, while profit before tax grew 21 per cent to £13.4m (£11.1m). After a 5 per cent increase in earnings per share to 18.8p, an interim dividend of 4.75p was recommended, a 12 per cent increase.

Mr Bridge said Greene King was on track to deliver synergy benefits of £3m from the acquisition of Magic Pub, thanks to greater purchasing power, the sale of Greene King ales through the enlarged chain and reductions in overheads.

Magic Pub contributed £6m of trading profit in the period, slightly less than the £7.2m generated in the full six-month period by the existing retail estate, a 12 per cent rise. Tenanted pubs increased by 4 per cent to £8m, while higher marketing costs reduced the brewing contribution to £3m (£3.2m).

Airtours heads off for £250m spree

Tom Stevenson
City Editor

Airtours is planning a spending spree costing up to £250m to expand its overseas operations to a targeted 50 per cent of profits. Sources close to the holiday company believe an early deal will be the acquisition of Signature, a Canadian tour operator currently owned by UK rival First Choice.

Airtours, which has bought two tour companies in Canada since 1994, has said it believes the Canadian market is too small to sustain three major tour operators and David Crossland, chief executive, is understood to have spoken to new First Choice head Peter Long about buying Signature, which might be worth up to £50m.

Boosted by buoyant profit figures, announced yesterday for the year to September, Airtours has a strong balance sheet and is also planning a rapid roll-out of its successful fly-cruise operation in which it currently runs three liners in the Mediterranean and Caribbean. Airtours' largest shareholder, Carnival Corporation of the US, is credited with creating the fly-cruise market in America.

In the 12 months to September, profits rose 46 per cent to £86.8m as sales increased by 30 per cent to £1.72bn. Earnings per share of 45.6p (32.8p) allowed a 14 per cent increase in full-year dividend to 16p (14p).

Mr Crossland said: "In a short period of time, Airtours has transformed itself from a purely UK-based company into an internationally diversified leisure group. These results show the group is in excellent condition."

Profits from overseas operations, which as well as Canada include a Scandinavian business, represented 42 per cent of the total in the latest trading year compared with 18 per cent in 1994. In 1993 all the profits came from UK holidaymakers.

The growth of the overseas operations helped cushion Airtours from the disastrous summer of 1995 when overcapacity caused a collapse in prices for late-booked holidays and a

sharp fall in profits across the industry.

That experience led Airtours to cut capacity for this summer's holidays by 12 per cent, which was the main reason behind higher profits. Mr Crossland said the industry proved to itself that it could make more money by selling fewer holidays and he believes there has been a sea change in the hitherto highly cyclical and volatile business.

Capacity for summer 1997 holidays is forecast to remain at this year's lower levels and with bookings back to the levels achieved by this point in 1994, Mr Crossland said another good year was in prospect.

Airtours' good figures came only weeks after the Department of Trade and Industry said it was launching a Monopolies and Mergers Commission investigation into the UK holiday industry where the close ties between tour operators and the travel agents that sell their holidays have been seen as being anti-competitive. Airtours owns Going Places, both number two in their respective fields.

£20m bid for Chester Water

Dee Valley Water yesterday launched an agreed £20m takeover bid for Chester Water, a move that will result in a 3.5 per cent reduction in bills for customers of both companies.

The terms of the offer are 403 new Dee Valley shares for every 1,000 Chester Water shares. Dee's shares held steady at 395p, valuing each Chester share at 169.26p. Chester's shares closed at 162.5p, up 8.5p compared with the closing market price of 162.5 and values Chester shares at 169.26p each, excluding the interim dividend of 2.55p, which Chester shareholders will retain.

There is an alternative offer of cash and shares for Chester's investors, who will also keep the recently announced 2.55p interim dividend. They can elect to receive 282 new Dee Valley shares together with either a cash payment or a special dividend of £508.20 for every 1,000 Chester shares.

Dee Valley has received undertakings to accept the offer from Chester shareholders representing around 65.7 per cent of the company's equity.

The companies have agreed with the Office of Water Services that from 1 April 2001, bills for customers of both Dee Valley Water and Chester Water will be reduced by 3.5 per cent over and above the combined existing 'X' pricing factors. Brian Jenkins, chairman of Dee Valley, said: "The enlarged group will generate cost savings to benefit our customers and shareholders." The 3.5 per cent reduction in price limits is over

Wickes resignation ahead of cash call

Patrick Toohar

Wickes, the DIY chain under investigation by the Serious Fraud Office and the Metropolitan Police, has paved the way for today's expected £50m rights issue by announcing yet another boardroom resignation.

In a brief statement, Wickes said Sanford Kaplan had resigned as a non-executive director with immediate effect. Mr Kaplan, 80, is a close associate of Henry Sweetbaum, Wickes' former chairman and chief executive who resigned in June after disclosing past profits had been overstated by £51m. Mr Kaplan is the sixth director to resign in as many months.

It is understood institutional investors insisted on his departure before agreeing to subscribe to the rescue rights issue.

Sanford Sigloff, another non-executive director linked to Mr Sweetbaum, remains on the board, though insiders say his resignation is only a matter of time. Both Mr Kaplan and

Mr Sigloff, 65, are based in the US and have been criticised for failing to spot the accounting irregularities over five years that triggered the fraud inquiry.

An independent accountants' report confirmed "serious mismanagement" and "deliberate misrepresentation" of certain rebate and contribution arrangements with Wickes' suppliers. Wickes is expected to draw another line under the Sweetbaum era today when it announces plans to abandon its overseas operations as part of a business plan contained in the rights issue prospectus.

Mr Sweetbaum had opened stores in South Africa, Belgium, France and Holland, as well as a conservatory business in the US, and planned to develop the Wickes concept around the world. It is expected these operations will be sold to concentrate on Wickes' 120 stores. The document will also include the restated 1995 accounts, results for the first six months of this year and a trading statement and forecast.

	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
Wickes (FY)	1,722m (1,272m)	86.8m (62.4m)	45.6p (32.8p)	16p (14p)
Dee Valley (FY)	1,531m (1,029m)	86.8m (62.4m)	45.6p (32.8p)	2.55p (1.70p)
Dee Valley (FY)	2,471m (1,692m)	21.6m (14.5m)	51.6p (40.9p)	19.5p (17.7p)
Dee Valley (FY)	24.5m (16.2m)	7.37m (4.6m)	74.5p (57.4p)	15.45p (13.75p)
HP Bulmer (FY)	1,629m (1,377m)	16.9m (13.8m)	20.2p (16.4p)	4.9p (4.59p)
Greene King (FY)	108m (71.7m)	17.1m (10.7m)	22.0p (14.3p)	11.45p (10.50p)
Signature (FY)	4.9m (2.3m)	1.4m (0.6m)	2.07p (1.09p)	0.5p (0.4)
Dee Valley (FY)	49.9m (45.2m)	0.75m (0.55m)	0.4m (0.3m)	1.5p (1.4)
First Choice (FY)	22.4m (18.1m)	4.2m (3.3m)	17.1p (13.9p)	4.5p (4.25p)
Greene King (FY)	108m (71.7m)	17.1m (10.7m)	22.0p (14.3p)	11.45p (10.50p)
Wickes (FY)	2,471m (1,692m)	21.6m (14.5m)	51.6p (40.9p)	19.5p (17.7p)
Dee Valley (FY)	24.5m (16.2m)	7.37m (4.6m)	74.5p (57.4p)	15.45p (13.75p)
Dee Valley (FY)	24.5m (16.2m)	7.37m (4.6m)	74.5p (57.4p)	15.45p (13.75p)
Dee Valley (FY)	24.5m (16.2m)	7.37m (4.6m)	74.5p (57.4p)	15.45p (13.75p)

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Why Clarke must resist the siren voices calling for a lower pound

Plain common sense has little place in economic analysis. The disagreement about the strength of the pound between the Bank of England and virtually every City commentator is a case in point. The City takes the common sense view that a strong pound is equivalent to higher interest rates. It means lower inflation and will hammer exports. This sounds extremely plausible - but it is at best only half-right.

Sterling has risen 12 per cent against the German mark since August and 17 per cent from its record lows in 1995. To City economists, almost to a man, the exchange rate appreciation reduces the need for an increase in base rates to keep inflation heading towards its target. A stronger pound makes imports cheaper in terms of sterling, which helps keep domestic inflation down. On top of that UK companies will find it harder to export because their prices will be higher in foreign currency terms, and the loss of competitiveness will tend to reduce GDP growth, limiting inflationary pressure.

The pound's rise will therefore be good for inflation and bad for exports and growth. Some analysts still hold to the rule of thumb published in an old Treasury working paper that a 4 per cent appreciation is equivalent to a 1 point rise in base rates. Some City folk espouse this view so passionately that the last regular meeting between Bank officials and economists working for the gilt-edge market-makers reportedly became unusually heated.

Much of industry is with the City on this, starting up the usual complaints about an "overvalued" pound, though the exchange rate is some 13 per cent below its ERM level in real and nominal terms and not yet back to its 1993-94 level against the mark.

The Bank of England takes a view which finds far more favour with the academic economics community - and, per-

haps curiously, Treasury ministers. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has resolutely insisted the pound shall go where the market takes it. Chief Secretary William Waldegrave says British exporters are still at a competitive advantage.

The Bank's analysis, in the last Inflation Report and backed by research published in the Quarterly Bulletin, sees the exchange rate as the end product of forces in the UK and overseas economies. In the jargon, it is an endogenous variable - and not an instrument or target of monetary policy. The implications of the pound's appreciation for domestic inflation depend on why it has risen.

A currency appreciation can be caused by two types of influence: monetary and real. Real effects include factors such as higher oil prices for an oil-producing country, or a supply-side improvement such as higher quality of output or improved productivity, or a demand-side shift such as a step increase in demand for British goods because they are more fashionable. An appreciation due to monetary factors would reflect the expectation of either rising UK interest rates or falling overseas ones.

Suppose the pound's recent rise can be pinned on real factors. What effect would this have on inflation and exports? The revaluation of imports in sterling terms would contribute to a one-off decline in prices, which would reduce 12-month inflation rates for a year. But without additional monetary tightening, leading to "second-round" effects, it would make almost no difference to inflation in the medium term. No increase in base rates, no sustained fall in inflation.

As for exports,



Diane Coyle

If markets have revalued sterling because they expect rates to be raised, its rise is no substitute for an increase in the cost of borrowing

they might well grow despite the increase in the exchange rate, if the underlying cause were indeed something like higher quality or productivity. A recent, as yet unpublished, paper commissioned by the Treasury, by Peter Sinclair and Paul Brenton of Birmingham University, finds that there have been substantial im-

provements in quality in a number of industries - especially cars and electronics - courtesy of inward investment - so increases in UK market share since 1980 have taken place without any depreciation or reduction in foreign currency prices.

Turning secondly to the monetary causes of a higher exchange rate, the Bank argues that if the currency market's expectations of either higher UK or lower continental interest rates are not met, sterling will adjust itself back to a lower level. Only if an early increase in base rates goes hand in hand with the pound's rise will the latter imply a lower path for future inflation. The Inflation Report notes that this is "a good example of a case where mixing together exchange rate and interest rates changes to assess the stance of monetary policy makes no sense". In other words, if the markets have revalued the pound because they expect Ken Clarke will have to raise base rates, the pound's rise is no substitute for an increase in the cost of borrowing.

It is true, in this case, that strong sterling combined with the increase in interest rates would hit exports along with the economy's overall growth. That is the point of raising interest rates - to cool an overheated pace of demand. It is perfectly reasonable to be concerned about the impact this policy would have on UK competitiveness. But the solution is not to avoid increasing base rates if that is what is needed given the Government's fiscal policy. The Bank of England is not allowed to argue - although the City could - that Mr Clarke should instead have opted for a much tougher Budget to keep economic

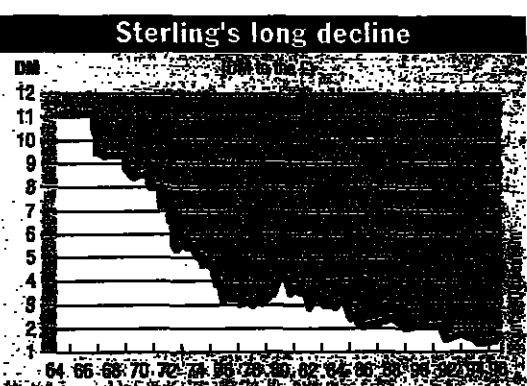
growth down to a sustainable pace at a lower level for interest rates and the pound. The Bank's job is to advise on what level of interest rates will allow the Government to meet its inflation target, given the Government's fiscal stance.

Some commentators seem to think the Government should now be seeking a competitive devaluation. They look at the post-ERM experience, one of the few episodes in sterling's history when it was not the choice of higher inflation. There is no doubt this gave British exports a huge boost. However, it did take place during a severe recession, and can not really be compared to any other devaluation since the Great Depression.

Professor Sinclair says: "I would be guarded in suggesting that sterling's appreciation now does not matter, but it is true that you can not generalise about the exchange rate. You can not take it as a policy parameter."

If the exchange rate were such a powerful influence on the UK's share of export markets, it would be hard to explain why that market share has declined steadily even though the pound has lost nearly three-quarters of its value against foreign currencies in 75 years. Britain's share of world trade has dropped from a sixth during the 1950s to a sixteenth by 1980. It stabilised during a decade which started with an enormous surge in sterling's exchange rate and for most of which the Government aimed to keep the pound stable rather than falling.

As the new Treasury research suggests, the quality of British exports could be equally important. A Conservative government certainly has no place listening to the siren voices of commentators arguing that the Chancellor - even one from a Midlands manufacturing constituency - should relax over interest rates so that the pound can fall again.



Sir Clive Sinclair laps up Stringfellow's party

PEOPLE & BUSINESS



Hyperlinked: Peter Stringfellow's new Internet site

Chiswick's Bedford Park in west London. Ms Bowes denies a culture clash saying she has simply reviewed herself out of a job. "It is all very amicable. I just reached the conclusion that things needed to be done differently."

Bad news for Michael and Maurice Bennett, the two brothers who run the Oasis chain of fashion shops. Oasis has agreed to pay £5,000 compensation to Tateossian, a jewellery designer, after the designer found items on sale in Oasis stores that were virtually identical to his own.

The main difference was the price. Tateossian's silver and semi-precious stone necklaces and bracelets retail for up to £70. The Oasis versions were priced as low as £2.99 at branches in Oxford Street, Covent Garden and Kingston-upon-Thames.

John Morris, the bearded Australian who runs the AIM-listed Gold Mines of Sardinia, is in the City this week updating the market on progress. Everything is progressing well as far as the gold is concerned though the local employees have needed a bit of extra training as far as safety regulations are concerned.

Apparently some of the workers have been used to work without the usual pro-

tective clothing and driving heavy trucks down narrow lanes with a bottle of vino tucked under the seat. "It's what they've been used to but we've told them that's not the way we do things."

Research by Churchill Insurance has shown that Friday the 13th has proved to be particularly unlucky. In one incident a driver's car was hit by a washing machine whilst on the motorway. "The washing machine fell off the back of a lorry," the claimant said. Another driver had his car stolen from outside his home. Then found the steering wheel had been left on the lawn.

Marc Doman has been appointed head of sales and marketing at AIM Global Advisors, the European operation of AIM Management Group which recently merged with Invesco. Mr Doman, who was previously at Invesco, joins with a brief to beef up the London office, which only has a handful of staff. He says he knew nothing of the merger. "I knew there was something in the air but I didn't know it was Invesco."

Mr Doman, 45, expects to be moving AIM from its offices on Bishopsgate soon as they are already too small.

Nigel Cope

Foreign Exchange Rates

Country	Spot	1 month	3 months
US	1.6557	9.7	34.31
Canada	2.3528	9.4	34.15
Germany	2.3528	9.4	34.15
France	2.3528	9.4	34.15
Italy	2.3528	9.4	34.15
Japan	168.85	9.5	281.27
ECU	1.9253	21.8	66.61
Belgium	2.3528	9.4	34.15
Denmark	3.7728	22.7	65.53
Netherlands	2.8225	8.2	240.22
Ireland	0.9973	5.1	16.93
Norway	1.0683	16.90	380.27
Sweden	2.1476	12.4	31.48
Switzerland	2.2746	15.7	44.33
Australia	2.0389	10.15	25.22
Hong Kong	12.935	93.58	240.73
Malaysia	4.745	0.0	0.0
New Zealand	2.3787	54.71	155.18
Saudi Arabia	6.3087	0.0	0.0
Singapore	2.3765	0.0	0.0

Other Spot Rates

Country	Sterling	Dollar
Argentina	16560	0.9999
Australia	17558	1.0455
Brazil	17370	1.0773
China	13.791	8.2382
Egypt	5.8351	3.4051
Finland	7.8487	4.6710
Ghana	26.4534	1.7200
Greece	433.95	893.40
India	56.9385	35.0000
Kuwait	0.4972	0.3002

Forward rates quoted high to low are at a discount; subtract from spot rate; rate quoted low to high are at a premium; add to spot rate.

Interest Rates

Country	Rate	Country	Rate
UK	6.00%	Germany	2.50%
France	5.50%	Italy	4.50%
Japan	5.75%	Spain	4.75%
Belgium	2.50%	Denmark	5.00%
Netherlands	2.50%	Sweden	4.00%
Australia	2.50%	Switzerland	4.00%

Bond Yields

Country	1yr	3yr	5yr	10yr
UK	7.1%	7.2%	7.5%	7.8%
US	5.1%	5.5%	5.8%	6.1%
Germany	4.2%	4.5%	4.8%	5.1%
France	4.7%	5.0%	5.3%	5.6%

Money Market Rates

Instrument	1 Day	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months	1 Year
Interbank	5.5%	5.5%	5.5%	5.5%	5.5%
Local Authority	5.5%	5.5%	5.5%	5.5%	5.5%
Discount Market	5.5%	5.5%	5.5%	5.5%	5.5%
Treasury Bills	5.5%	5.5%	5.5%	5.5%	5.5%
Dollar CDs	5.5%	5.5%	5.5%	5.5%	5.5%
ECU Linked	5.5%	5.5%	5.5%	5.5%	5.5%

Tourist Rates

Country	1 Day	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months	1 Year
Australia	2.0200	2.0200	2.0200	2.0200	2.0200
Canada	2.0200	2.0200	2.0200	2.0200	2.0200
France	2.0200	2.0200	2.0200	2.0200	2.0200
Germany	2.0200	2.0200	2.0200	2.0200	2.0200
Italy	2.0200	2.0200	2.0200	2.0200	2.0200
Japan	2.0200	2.0200	2.0200	2.0200	2.0200
Netherlands	2.0200	2.0200	2.0200	2.0200	2.0200
Sweden	2.0200	2.0200	2.0200	2.0200	2.0200
Switzerland	2.0200	2.0200	2.0200	2.0200	2.0200
USA	2.0200	2.0200	2.0200	2.0200	2.0200

Life Financial Futures

Contract	Settlement	High/Low	Open
Long Call	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Call	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Put	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Put	100.00	100.00	100.00

Life FTSE Index Option

Settlement	Settlement	Settlement	Settlement
100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Energy

Contract	Settlement	High/Low	Open
Long Call	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Call	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Put	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Put	100.00	100.00	100.00

Commodity Indices

Index	Settlement	High/Low	Open
100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Latest Unit Trust Prices

Unit	Price	Unit	Price
100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Industrial Metals

Commodity	Settlement	High/Low	Open
100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Precious Metals

Commodity	Settlement	High/Low	Open
100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Agricultural

Commodity	Settlement	High/Low	Open
100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Other Softs

Commodity	Settlement	High/Low	Open
100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

London Metal Exchange

Commodity	Settlement	High/Low	Open
100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Other Softs

Commodity	Settlement	High/Low	Open
100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Other Softs

Commodity	Settlement	High/Low	Open
100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Other Softs

Commodity	Settlement	High/Low	Open
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Other Softs

Commodity	Settlement	High/Low	Open
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Other Softs

Commodity	Settlement	High/Low	Open
100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
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Other Softs

Commodity	Settlement	High/Low	Open
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Other Softs

Commodity	Settlement	High/Low	Open
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100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Other Softs

Commodity	Settlement	High/Low	Open
100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00</

sport

Fed into the process of growing up, boxing appeared unfailingly heroic; refracted through time, noble images flourished in the mind

Sure, it is more of a business than a sport, at times callous and cruel, exploitative, and all too often tragic, but no matter how legitimate the case against boxing, fascination prevails over ambivalence.

Fed into the process of growing up, boxing appeared unfailingly heroic; refracted through time, noble images flourished in the mind. It is not a metaphor for life but, as Joyce Carol Oates wrote, "a unique, closed, self-referential world, in which the individual is in one sense possessed of a will tantamount to God's, in another totally helpless."

Donald McCrae first sensed boxing's mysterious thrill as a boy in Germiston, South Africa, confused by the brutal indignities of apartheid endured by his black friends. Excited by their descriptions of Muhammad Ali, he later undertook a journey

that led to the publication *Dark Trade* (Mainstream, £14.99), a vivid study of the one sport that should never be referred to as a game.

Anyone who has ever wondered what goes on in the minds of fighters, what strange instinct draws them back, time and time again, to the vicious realities of the ring, will gain from the confidences McCrae established on his travels.

Two months before indictment for rape, shortly before fighting Donovan "Razor" Ruddock for the second time, his undisputed world heavyweight championship gone, Tyson told McCrae: "That's the only thing that's certain in my life. Fighting Ruddock. Who knows what else is coming? I don't... an' sometimes, you know, I don't even care. Sometimes I get a real bad feeling in my stomach, that it's gonna come

crashing down an' I'll be back where I started."

Dark visions of doom. One of the greatest heavyweight champions, Joe Louis, glad-handing pitifully from a wheelchair at Caesars Palace, Sonny Liston, broke and drugged up when found dead in Las Vegas. "Even Ali, look at Ali," Tyson said. "I love Ali but when they introduce him at my fights I look away. Sure, they cheer him, but where's his beauty now, his speed, his talent? It's gone, it's gone."

For some of us McCrae's experiences have a familiar, disturbing ring. The loss of innocence, the onset of cynicism. Only the names are different.



KEN JONES

body was returned to Merthyr Tydfil. Bradley Stone, James Murray, the terrible shadow that fell across Gerald McClellan's life as the result of a ferocious contest against Nigel Benn. Poor Michael Watson.

McCrae got close to Watson, listened while he prepared for the second of two tussles against Chris

Eubank, noted his earnest expressions of faith in God - and then saw it happen. More probably the result of cumulative punishment rather than the heavy blow an almost beaten Eubank landed at the end of the 11th round, Watson slipped into a coma from which he will never fully recover.

As Hugh McIlvanney states in *McIlvanney on Boxing* (Mainstream, £15.99), an update of two previous collections, "Of course, sad stories are never hard to find in boxing. All too often the game's cruelties seem too much to be balanced by its exhilarations. I shall spare myself and everyone else another confession about a lifelong enthusiasm increasingly assailed by misgivings."

That McIlvanney, the most celebrated of British sportswriters, admits to shivers of unease about an

activity embedded deep in his psyche is certainly far more important than objections based only on the principle that boxing has no place in a civilised society.

Over the last 25 years not much in boxing has escaped McIlvanney's attention, and nobody in that time has matched the high quality of his analytical prose or been more acutely aware of the sport's implications.

A big advantage, one I shared with McIlvanney, was to be around at the time of figures far more notable than nearly all those McCrae interrogated. What, one wonders would McCrae have made of Ali, Joe Frazier, a young George Foreman, Larry Holmes, Marvin Hagler, Sugar Ray Leonard, Thomas Hearns, Roberto Duran? And on this side of the pond, Ken Buchan-

nan, Howard Winstone, John Conteh, Chris and Kevin Finnegan, Barry McGuigan and others?

The publication of Frazier's autobiography (*Smokin' Joe*, Robson Books, £16.95) revealed him to be bitterly at odds with Ali, a man unable to forgive the taunts he suffered throughout their epic saga. Attempts have since been made to bring about a reconciliation.

As usual, the sport is well served by *The British Boxing Board of Control Yearbook*, edited and compiled by Barry J. Hugman (Queen Anne Press, £14.99), and the *A-Z of World Boxing* by Bert Blewett (Robson Books, £22.95) is a well produced work of reference. *From Zero to Hero* (André Deutsch, £15.99), written with Norman Giller, brings the curtain down on Frank Bruno's career.

BOOKS FOR CHRISTMAS: Football is now big business in publishing. Phil Shaw samples the latest prose

Mining a highly lucrative seam

Hard on the heels of *Fever Pitch* comes sales pitch. The unprecedented volume of books vying for our cash this Christmas reflects the fact that, in the aftermath of Nick Hornby's extraordinary success, publishers have never been more willing to take a chance on football.

So fashionable has the game become that autobiographies of two legendary figures are actually enjoying a run among the Top 10 hardbacks. *Outright*, by Kenny Dalglish, with Henry Winter (Hodder & Stoughton, £16.99), reveals more of one complex character than *Jack Charlton* (Partridge Press, £16.99) does of another, without quite demonstrating that the "real" King Kenny is as funny a man as his friends claim.

Dalglish relives the Hillsborough disaster with all the sensitivity he showed at the time, and there is no self-pity as he recounts how the pressure eventually caused his head to "explode". It is also evident that much of his famous taciturnity comes from his domineering mentor at Celtic, Jock Stein.

Charlton, in contrast, was often at odds with Don Revie before Leeds became a force, yet there is more of Revie's cautious outlook in his approach to management than he lets on. Peter Byrne, *Big Jack's "ghost"* and dozen of Irish football writers, might have been better employed penning an objective biography.

On to two less "traditional" books, which view football in the way that made Hornby famous: as part of popular culture, linked to the wider world. *Euro '96* inspired two enjoyable examples. Dave Hill's *England's Glory: 1966 And All That* (Pan, £9.99) and David Thomson's *A-Z* (Bloomsbury, £16.99).

Hill, by starting his book about England's distant World Cup triumph with an account of Geoff Hurst handling a question and answer session at Butler's in Bognor Regis, makes plain his intention to probe beyond mythology and mere football. The reader becomes as well acquainted with the style of Harold Wilson as the steel of Ray Wilson.

Thomson's book has been described, misleadingly, as the first to focus entirely on one

game, the '66 final. In fact, the author uses the match as a peg on which to hang the story of his own journey of self-discovery (well, it was the 60s). So the sexual revolution rubs shoulders with England's wingless wonders, while Alf Ramsey is compared with Phillip Larkin. Dull, it isn't.

Pete Davies wrote a classic about the 1990 World Cup. *All Played Out*. His follow-up, *I Lost My Heart to the Doncaster Belles* (Helmans, £14.99) is not, by definition of its subject matter, of similarly epic proportions, but it does not disappoint. Davies followed the fabled women's team through 1994-95, eliciting the players' thoughts, about the game and their "private" lives. Patronise these "ladies" at your peril.

Simon Inglis should also figure in any self-respecting fan's

The sexual revolution rubs shoulders with England's wingless wonders. Dull, it isn't

library. An updated version of his *Football Grounds of Britain* (Collins Willow, £14.99) is particularly timely, what with the old architecture of football disappearing and new stadiums rising everywhere. Inglis gives new meaning to the words "detail", "research" and "expert", while his vigorous prose sets him apart from groundhopping anoraks.

There is now an indispensable companion volume. *The Football Fan's Guide*, by Janet Williams and Mark Johnson (Harper Collins, £8.99), not only gives incredibly precise directions to every ground but also details of which pubs to drink in (and which to avoid), where to get a good veggieburger and even the state of the toilets.

Meanwhile, *Elegance Born of Brutality: An Eclectic History of the Football Boot*, by Ian McArthur and Dave Kemp (Two Heads Publishing, £15.99 hardback, £9.99 paperback), is an example of how to turn a cow's

hide into a silk purse. From the primitive Manfield-Hotspur to today's Predator, boots have been an essential yet invariably overlooked facet of the game. When the authors wrote to the Football Association, they were informed that there was nothing on footwear in Lancaster Gate's collection of 2,000 books and were they sure this would make a book? They were, it has, and it is lovingly illustrated to boot.

Another visual treat is *One: Images of a Goalkeeping Season*, featuring the photographs of Robert (son of Bob) Wilson (Boxtree, £10.99). There is not a single action shot, nor, curiously, many of hands though, as his father suggests in an eloquent introduction, "the dedication and the effort and the drive oozes out of some of the studies". Most are of scarred, stubby faces, brilliantly evoking the solitary nature of a breed apart.

Equally original, but in the field of biography, is Richard Adamson's *Bogota Bandit* (Mainstream, £14.99). The subtitle - "The Outlaw Life of Charlie Mitten: Manchester United's penalty king" - reveals more, as well as linking the book to a club whose name should encourage the sales it deserves.

Mitten was part of Old Trafford's first great side after the Second World War. He broke with the feudal set-up of English football to go and play for a millionaire football baron in Colombia. An adventure story of sorts, it is also a critique of the insularity endemic in these islands.

The cover of *Dream On: A Year in the Life of a Premier League Club*, by Alex Fynn and H Davidson (Simon & Schuster, £14.99), shows a wall on which names like Greaves, Jennings and Chivers are spray-painted. The shot conjures up Tottenham's past, inviting comparisons with Hunter Davies' seminal study, *The Glory Game*. Although it is strong on the acrimony between Terry Venables and Alan Sugar, as well as on the politics of the Premier League and the unfettered commercialism of the big clubs, the book seldom emulates its predecessor's ability to be a fly on the dressing-room wall. Once bitten, Spurs were obviously twice shy.

Shaka Hislop, as seen in *One - Images of a Goalkeeping Season*

Photograph: Robert Wilson

Derick Allsop's *Kicking in the Wind* (Headline, £14.99) succeeds rather better in getting "inside" a club the way Hunter Davies did. That the club is terminally unsuccessful Rochdale ple should not deter potential purchasers. Allsop turns a year in their humdrum existence

into a gripping soap opera, whose plots and personnel will engage even those who have never visited the town.

I Think I'll Manage, by psychologist George Sik (Headline, £15.99) promises insights into the tricks of the managerial trade. Unless you count Dave Bassett staging Christmas in

August, his interviewees are actually rather short on "tricks". However, the black humour of a precarious profession shines through. What, the author asks Jim Smith, keeps you at it? "The mortgage," he replies.

Talking of the domestic life of managers, or the lack of it, one of the many appealing

stories in *Return of the Little Villain*, by Brian Little with Peter White (Sports Projects, £11.95) concerns the day the gas man called to find the Aston Villa supreme home alone for once. Little had to ask him to come back when his wife was in. He had no idea where the meter was.

Club tales that are not always received with warmth

The word "official" is frequently used to lend a spurious authority to a book. More often than not, it also turns out to be code for "sanitised version". Now Tottenham have banned a book about their greatest season, Ken Ferrie's *The Double* (Two Heads, £9.99), from being sold at White Hart Lane because it is unauthorised, i.e. no licence fee has been paid for the "right" to write about Spurs.

The publishers also claim that Spurs will not even sell them advertising space in the club magazine. Which is a

shame, because the story of the historic 1961-62 campaign, and what became of the players, is not widely known among football supporters under 40.

Title notwithstanding, Bryon Butler's *The Official Illustrated History of the FA Cup* (Headline, £25) is a sumptuous celebration of 125 years of the greatest knock-out competition of all.

Butler's mellifluous tones have told the story of many a giant-killing on radio. The same lyrical, romantic quality, allied to a lynx-eyed attention to detail, illuminates the text. Yet, if

anything, the pictures are even more evocative: there is at least one from every final, including a portrait of Morton Peto Betts, match-winner for The Wanderers in 1872, which was discovered in a cricket pavilion in Kent.

Football lovers and followers of particular clubs alike (not necessarily the same thing) will delight in Butler's homage. For those looking for something more specific there is the *Illustrated History of Leeds United* by Andrew Mourant (Hamlyn, £17.99), an addition to a coffee-table series which includes up-

dated histories of Arsenal, Celtic, Liverpool, Manchester United and Spurs (authorised, naturally). Hamlyn also offer *Player by Player* editions on Arsenal and Liverpool (£14.99), both combining Ivan Ponning's pithy pen portraits with superb action pictures.

Tapping the same market, with statistical bias, Broadon Books have produced lavish new large-format books on Rangers (by Bob Ferrie and Robert McElroy, £16.99) and Leeds United (by Martin Jarred and Malcolm Macdonald,

£16.99) in the *Complete Record* series. Also from the Derby-based publishers, in collaboration with the *Express & Star* newspaper, comes *Memories of Molineux*, full of old-gold gold-olies (also £16.99).

Football literature's equivalent of the independent rock labels are still out there proving that they do not need permission from the corporate culture. *The Boys from up the Hill: An Oral History of Oxford United* (Crowberry, £9.99), by Geron Swann and Andrew Ward, contains the first-hand accounts of

players (Ron "The Tank" Atkinson) among them, managers, directors and fans of a village club's rise and rise.

Jeff Kent, who collected a similar anthology of anecdotes about his favourite club, has now compiled *Port Vale Personalities: A Biographical Dictionary* (£14.75 plus £1.65 P&P from Witan Books, 8 Nelson Crescent, Cotes Heath, via Stafford, ST21 6ST). Every player from 120 years is featured, along with the terrace hard-case who became a Pentecostal minister.

The European Football Yearbook 96-97, edited by Mike Hammond (Sports Projects Ltd, £22.95), contains 1,120 pages and covers club football from Aberystwyth to Zagreb as well as the international scene. The same company's *Aston Villa: Double Winners 1896-97*, edited by Bernard Gallagher (£5.95), takes a magnifying glass to a bygone age. No "official" tag in sight, but Villa, aware of both its historical significance and commercial potential, happily sell it in their shop.

Phil Shaw

Fat cats creaming off the cash

From John Williamson
Sir: Now that the fat cats of the Premier League are to receive even more money from Bass [Carling], it is time for the Nationwide League clubs to withdraw contact from them completely. The gulf between these greedy clubs and the other divisions is now so vast, that there is little to be gained pretending that they are the old First Division.

Most of the present First Division clubs face financial ruin

sports letter

if they were promoted. They would need to invest heavily on players only to be relegated and left with inflated salaries that could not be paid on gates. Look at Manchester City and the possible relegation of Sunderland and Middlesbrough.

Millions of pounds are being spent on foreign players because "they are better value". So there is little money coming back to the lower leagues. Let them operate in their own vacuum. No relegation, no League Cup and an FA Cup that

consists of them and non-League clubs. Make the Vauxhall Conference the new Fourth Division and see how they like it.

We once had the finest football league in the world but these people seem intent on wrecking it in the pursuit of profit.

JOHN WILLIAMSON
Alston, Cumbria.
Letters should be marked "For publication" and should contain daytime and evening phone numbers. They should be sent to Sports Editor, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, London E14 5D. They may be shortened for reasons of space.

Hetherington signs three players from Eagles

Rugby League

DAVE HADFIELD

Gary Hetherington, the new Leeds chief executive, has returned to his former club, Sheffield Eagles, to sign three players. The young half-backs, Ryan Sheridan and Dean Lawford, plus the former Huddersfield loose forward, Anthony Farrell, are all joining Leeds for next year's Super League season.

Sheridan and Lawford were both products of Sheffield's successful junior scouting system. Their arrival will probably end Leeds' interest in Warrington's transfer-listed Iestyn Harris.

Farrell, rather over-ambitiously, touted as "the new Ellery Hanley" in his younger days, has had his career so far blighted by injury, but Hetherington remains a firm admirer. The bearer of a famous Rugby League name will head the

Super League's clubs' quest for a higher profile next year with the appointment Colin Myler as the first chief executive of Rugby League Europe.

Myler, born in Widnes and a member of a clan that includes numerous distinguished players, will be based in London. His presence there may help to tap greater marketing opportunities. The First and Second Division clubs, which have recently formed a cohesive power

bloc of their own, have also advertised for a general manager.

In Sydney, the Australian Rugby League have made an even more significant appointment. Their new chief executive, replacing John Quayle, who resigned last month, is the Balmain president, Neil Whitaker.

Whitaker, 38, has had both sorts of education. He is a university graduate and a former hooker for Balmain in the Winfield Cup.

Brighton challenge taken on by Gritt

Steve Gritt said he was relishing the challenge of taking on the toughest job in football when he became the new manager of troubled Brighton and Hove Albion yesterday.

The Seagulls are 11 points adrift at the bottom of the Third Division - but that has not deterred Gritt. The former Charlton joint-manager said: "I wouldn't have taken the job on unless I was satisfied that the club has a future. In my talks I was given those assurances. I am ready for the challenge, and cannot wait for my first game at home to Hull on Saturday."

Gritt's appointment came just hours after the Sussex club had confirmed that they will be appealing against the two-point penalty imposed by the Football Association on Monday for a pitch invasion by fans during a home game against Lincoln City in October. Brighton's chief executive, David Bellotti, insists that the peaceful protest by the fans was aimed at the directors. "We are appealing on the grounds that the players have been penalised," he said.

Bellotti also revealed that Gritt, Brighton's third manager in the last year, was selected as Jimmy Case's successor from 50 applicants. The 39-year-old, who has been searching for a manager's job since parting company with Charlton 18 months ago, admitted: "It has been said that the Brighton job is the worst in football, but I have taken it on because primarily I am a football person."

"I have been very keen to get back ever since I left Charlton. We have got 24 games to turn things round at Brighton and it is an achievable task. Success for me would be for us to finish 23rd in the league, and just make sure we get off the bottom place."

Gritt hopes to appoint an assistant this week, and has urged disgruntled supporters to back the club from now until the end of the season. He said: "My message to fans is for them to get behind the team. Together we can do it and once we've put together a few wins we will have the teams above us sweating." He also revealed that he has been promised some money for team strengthening.

Scots win free tickets

Scottish fans have been given a financial bonus for their rearranged World Cup tie with Estonia. Those supporters who were in Tallinn on 9 October for the fixture that never was - the match which lasted three seconds - will be given free entry when the game is played in Monaco on 11 February.

However, those fans are unlikely to be celebrating too much. Ticket prices have been set at just £3.30 and £6.60 and the fans will have to make their own way to the south of France. It is, however, a small victory for the Scottish Football Association. Its chief executive, Jim Farry, said: "Fifa have listened to very strong representation from the SFA and we have managed to agree free entry for those supporters who were in Tallinn and who now wish to go to Monaco for the match."

"Not only will SFA Travel Club members who wish to attend the match receive complimentary tickets, but we've managed to maintain a moderate pricing structure for tickets which will be allocated only via the travel club and the SFA. It is fair to say we exercised a strong will to ensure a correct response was obtained from our friends in Estonia and Fifa. We would like to think those strong representations were heeded by the powers that be."

هكذا من الأصل



Fight fascination

Ken Jones considers the enduring appeal of boxing, page 28

SPORT

Stocking fillers

Phil Shaw reviews Christmas books for the football-minded, page 28



Gough enjoys the rough and the smooth

Cricket

DEREK PRINGLE
reports from Bulawayo
England 334; Zimbabwe 181-9

Sixteen wickets fell yesterday at the Bulawayo Athletic club, five of them to Darren Gough who bristled and batted, as Zimbabwe ended the day on 181 for 9, four runs short of the follow-on. But if Gough's haul represented a high spot in this final dress rehearsal for England, the fact that seven of the day's dismissals belonged to the tourists, means that several significant lines are still being fluffed.

However, in terms of runs and wickets, progress is undoubtedly being made, and several of the England's cricketers no longer look as if they are tangled up in winter cobwebs.

Mind you, even for bowlers like Gough and Andy Caddick, who on yesterday's evidence look as if they have started to fire - albeit with dummy rounds included - there must still be a lingering doubt as to how much is attributable to the opposition, who even on a good day, are not likely to provide more than two

of Zimbabwe's top six for the first Test.

If the truth be known, most of their order looked as if they were batting two places too high, and two many loose balls went unpunished to give a fair picture of England's achievements with the ball.

Despite that, Gough tried - and often succeeded - to bowl as fast as possible and if his boundless enthusiasm did not always make up for his overexuberance, the pursuit of the wooden ball and its associated high run tariff, his third spell on a stiflingly hot day, was admirably wholehearted.

Certainly, the luck which deserted Andy Caddick whose two early wickets at last represented a quality spell with the new ball, was certainly with the Yorkshireman, and on another day, two wicket-taking long hops could have brought right-angled runs. However, he

clean bowled two tailenders as well as removing Manish Ranchood with a shorter that flicked a protective glove, first ball.

"It takes time to get into a rhythm, and that eight-over spell at the start got me into a groove," he said afterwards. "There was a bit of carry and I gave it a hundred per cent. I got

the ball through and was rewarded with five wickets. Which is not always the case." A break he probably feels is deserved anyway, after spending the whole of last summer taking 67 wickets at 22.9 for Yorkshire.

It almost certainly means that Gough will be bowling in the first Test, probably alongside Alan Mullally and Caddick, who has now bowled himself into contention ahead of Ronnie Hunt, the Essex all-rounder's chance to play a part in the first Test evaporating when he scored just five, after tamely chipping Mpumeliso Mbangwa to mid-on. It was not the only soft dismissal, as John Crawley, a second stylish half-century under his belt, watched the England innings fall apart.

But, if the batting showed familiar frailties once again (only Knight, Crawley and Stewart seem settled), the fielding is also in need of a lift, and had England been able to catch as well as a top Test side, Zimbabwe may well have struggled to make three figures.

Two chances, as well as several half chances were spilled, though no individual was quite as culpable as John Rennie, the home team's captain, who capped three dropped slip catches with second over duck, skying an optimistic pull shot off Caddick to short mid-on.

Of his side, only the wicket-keeper, Wayne James, managed to score runs freely. However, as most of his 62 was scored by slashes high over the top of a diet of long-hops, his true abilities may not have been glimpsed. Eventually his demise came when he prodded a return catch to Phil Tufnell, who repeated the feat when Heath Streak did the same two overs later.

Photograph, page 29

Bulawayo scorecard	
England	Zimbabwe
1st Innings	1st Innings
1. Gough 111	1. Gough 111
2. Caddick 23	2. Caddick 23
3. Knight 23	3. Knight 23
4. Crawley 50	4. Crawley 50
5. Stewart 23	5. Stewart 23
6. James 11	6. James 11
7. Tufnell 11	7. Tufnell 11
8. Rennie 11	8. Rennie 11
9. Hunt 11	9. Hunt 11
10. Mbangwa 11	10. Mbangwa 11
11. Mumba 11	11. Mumba 11
12. Mumba 11	12. Mumba 11
13. Mumba 11	13. Mumba 11
14. Mumba 11	14. Mumba 11
15. Mumba 11	15. Mumba 11
16. Mumba 11	16. Mumba 11
17. Mumba 11	17. Mumba 11
18. Mumba 11	18. Mumba 11
19. Mumba 11	19. Mumba 11
20. Mumba 11	20. Mumba 11
21. Mumba 11	21. Mumba 11
22. Mumba 11	22. Mumba 11
23. Mumba 11	23. Mumba 11
24. Mumba 11	24. Mumba 11
25. Mumba 11	25. Mumba 11
26. Mumba 11	26. Mumba 11
27. Mumba 11	27. Mumba 11
28. Mumba 11	28. Mumba 11
29. Mumba 11	29. Mumba 11
30. Mumba 11	30. Mumba 11

Parkes may stay for full season

Football

ALAN NIXON

Sven-Goran Eriksson has agreed to join Blackburn Rovers as their new manager - but he cannot say when. The Swedish coach will accept a contract worth close to £1m a year in wages and bonuses from Jack Walker's ambitious club.

However, Eriksson is staying with Sampdoria until the Italian club have found a successor - they may keep him to his contract for the rest of the season.

Eriksson wants the Blackburn job badly and visited the club in

secret last week for the first time, when he also found out how much they were willing to pay. Blackburn want some kind of commitment from Eriksson in case he is tempted by a rival club, with Lazio and Borussia Mönchengladbach among his admirers.

Sources close to highly respected Eriksson claimed last night that he has said he will come as soon as possible, but Sampdoria want to dictate the timing of his departure. Eriksson refused to comment on Italian press reports that he has already handed in his notice, but it is now only a matter of when

rather than if he comes to Blackburn. Rovers are happy with that situation at the moment, as caretaker manager Tony Parkes is steering the club out of relegation trouble and they would settle for that fate in a troubled season.

The Tottenham striker Chris Armstrong has been ruled out for up to six weeks, and faces an operation on Monday after being told his damaged ankle will not respond to treatment.

Armstrong, Spurs' record signing at £4.5m, has had trouble for some time with his ankle, which he badly aggravated in the goalless draw against

Everton at White Hart Lane in August when he was carried off before half-time.

Armstrong has made several comeback attempts and remains Spurs' joint top scorer this season with six goals in 15 games, but lasted only the first half against Liverpool in his last appearance eight days ago, and now the problem has been identified as tendinitis.

The Sunderland manager Peter Reid is trying to call off the purchase of the Israeli striker Ronen Harazi because of medical problems. The Roker Park club have discovered that Harazi has been playing with a broken foot after he went through tests at the club to complete his £500,000 move from Beitar Jerusalem. Reid and his board are now hoping to put the deal on ice, but there may be complications if Harazi has signed a binding contract.

Mark Hughes, the Chelsea forward, is still hopeful of appearing in Wales' World Cup qualifier against Turkey in Cardiff on Saturday - even if he has to play with stitches in a four-inch ankle wound suffered against Leeds last week.

"I couldn't train today, but the medical advice is to keep the stitches in until after the game, so I will be guided by that," Hughes said. "The cut is still a little inflamed, but I don't want to miss this match."

The Northern Ireland manager, Bryan Hamilton, is hoping that the Newcastle winger Keith Gillespie will declare himself fit to play in Saturday's World Cup qualifier against Albania at Windsor Park on Saturday. Gillespie suffered a groin injury in Newcastle's goalless draw at Nottingham Forest on Monday, and the Blackpool forward, James Quinn, has been called in to the squad as cover.

Two of Albania's key players will miss the game in Northern Ireland - because they are stranded in Greece due to farmer's protests which have paralysed the transport network. Artan Xhumbri and Arjan Beqiri, who both play for the Greek team Kalamata, were unable to get to Athens to pick up British visas because of road blockades. Albania's assistant coach, Faruk Sejdi, said yesterday. Another player, Sokol Prenga, has refused to play because of a row over money after Albania's last match.

Brighton's new manager, Scottish football, page 28

Newcastle's French test

GUY HODGSON

Faustino Asprilla's decision to hoist the flag might have been as premature as it was costly. Having struggled to dispose of Metz in the last round of the UEFA Cup, the last thing Newcastle United wanted was another French club in the quarter-finals, but fate was far from kind when the draw was made in Geneva yesterday.

While Liverpool could approach the prospect of the Norwegian club, SK Brann, in the last eight of the European Cup-Winners' Cup with some confidence, Newcastle were paired with the French First Division leaders, Monaco, in a tie their manager Kevin Keegan described "as tough as they come".

Two goals from Asprilla at St James' Park saw off Metz, who deserved better than a 3-1 aggregate defeat, but the booking he got for flying his shirt on a corner post in celebration ensures he will miss the first leg of the quarter-final on Tuesday on 4 March. Monaco, who include the Scotland and former

stitches in until after the game, so I will be guided by that," Hughes said. "The cut is still a little inflamed, but I don't want to miss this match."

The Northern Ireland manager, Bryan Hamilton, is hoping that the Newcastle winger Keith Gillespie will declare himself fit to play in Saturday's World Cup qualifier against Albania at Windsor Park on Saturday. Gillespie suffered a groin injury in Newcastle's goalless draw at Nottingham Forest on Monday, and the Blackpool forward, James Quinn, has been called in to the squad as cover.

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Brighton's new manager, Scottish football, page 28

Celtic midfielder, John Collins, beat Arsenal's conquerors, Borussia Mönchengladbach, in the second round, which is enough to lower anyone's colours.

"They are one of the top two sides in France and this tie is as tough as they come," Keegan said. "They have good experi-

ence in Europe, good players, and beat Hamburg quite convincingly in the last round. We'll need to play better at home than we did against the Metz and we know we can do that. If we play the way we are capable of, we can go all the way."

"You must believe you can beat anyone. Having the first game at home makes it slight-

ly tougher for us, but we'll be looking to take a lead out there. We can put Europe on the back burner now until March, but it's something for us to look forward to and a fantastic tie in terms of interest."

By contrast, Liverpool could hardly have picked better opponents to face on 6 and 20 March. Barcelona, Fiorentina, Paris St-Germain and Benfica went into the hat as well. But they were paired with Brann, of Bergen, who entered the Cup-Winners' Cup, having lost their domestic final to Rosenborg.

Brann defeated PSV Eindhoven in the last round but are described, even by Norwegians, as ordinary. Then again, there was nothing remarkable about the Danes of Brøndby last season and they defeated Liverpool in the UEFA Cup.

"We're reasonably pleased," Roy Evans, the Liverpool manager, said. "At least we've avoided the bigger teams. But there's been a big improvement in Scandinavian football over the last few years and we always find them to be organised, strong, fit and difficult to beat."

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Wind speed: Nigel Mansell returns to the cockpit of a Formula One car as he tests for Jordan at Barcelona yesterday

Photograph: Allsport

Mansell back on the road again

Motor racing

IAN GORDON
reports from Barcelona

Nigel Mansell insisted last night that he is not a Formula One has-been and believes he can revive his racing career next season.

The former world champion successfully came through a testing session with Jordan-Peugeot in Spain yesterday 19 months after his previous comeback ended in an ignominious departure. Mansell was not embarrassed by Jordan's highly rated rock-

ie driver Ralf Schumacher even though the brother of the former world champion Michael had clocked up thousands of miles in the car already.

The 43-year-old was just three-tenths of a second slower than Schumacher, the leaving team's owner, Eddie Jordan, astonished at how quickly he had got up to pace.

"I have always had belief in my ability," Mansell said. "I didn't have much to regain as I have never lost it. Ralf is a very committed driver - he's very quick on the pedal. But I got close to him today as he has

done nearly 2,000 miles in testing. If you haven't got it, all you do is end up in the wall on the first lap. The proof of the pudding is in the eating."

"It's been in my blood for 20 years. You don't forget it. The biggest thing was the upsurge in speed. I have not done over 200mph in anything since the last time I drove a Formula One car early in 1995."

"The biggest difference I found was the brakes - they are phenomenal now. They are so much better than you can leave your braking much later."

"The fantastic thing with

computer technology is you can analyse every aspect of the circuit. You can see where you are doing quite well and areas where you're not."

Mansell, the third most successful driver in Formula One history with 31 wins, added: "It took me a few laps to get up to pace. Ralf did 30 laps yesterday with a best time of one minute 26 seconds. On my third lap today I did 1:24 after two years almost out of a car."

"I think that surprised a few people it showed the commitment was there, but it took me a lot longer to get into the

1:22's than I would have liked. "You have to build a relationship with a car, but you don't do that in just over 49 laps. But I will build on what happened tomorrow and be quicker."

Mansell, whose last competitive drive was in the Spanish Grand Prix in May 1995 when he ended his two-race comeback with McLaren by parking the car up, believes he will be back behind the wheel next year.

Mansell's return to the sport was announced yesterday by Jordan-Peugeot. The team, which has been in the sport since 1994, will race in the 1997 season. Mansell's return to the sport was announced yesterday by Jordan-Peugeot. The team, which has been in the sport since 1994, will race in the 1997 season.

Ronaldo's £25m deal

although he could not prevent his side losing their grudge match away to Real Madrid last weekend.

Fifa, world football's governing body, has confirmed a record 120 national team coaches have voted for their top three players in the 1996 Player of the Year poll with Newcastle's Alan Shearer, Ronaldo and Milan's George Weah leading the list. The winner of the world game's premier individual prize, which Weah won last year, will be announced in Lisbon on 20 January.

Shearer's goals for England during Euro '96 and his world record-breaking move to St James' Park thrust him into the international spotlight. Weah, who will collect Fifa's prize for helping to Liberia in the World Cup despite the internecine fighting in the country, helped guide Milan to the Italian league title.

Barcelona's vice-president, Joan Gaspart, who refused to discuss the terms of the deal.

Ronaldo, who came under Bobby Robson's spell at Barcelona after moving from the Dutch club PSV Eindhoven for £12.5m last year, will see his wages jump £1.6m a week next year. A World Cup winner in 1994, even though he did not play a game, Ronaldo can also expect to collect another £2m a year in producer endorsements.

Ronaldo finished his last season in the Netherlands as top scorer, and is currently joint-top in Spain with 13 league goals.

AS OFFERS GO, THIS ONE'S A CRACKER. 1P PER MINUTE FOR NATIONAL CALLS WITH MERCURY THIS CHRISTMAS.

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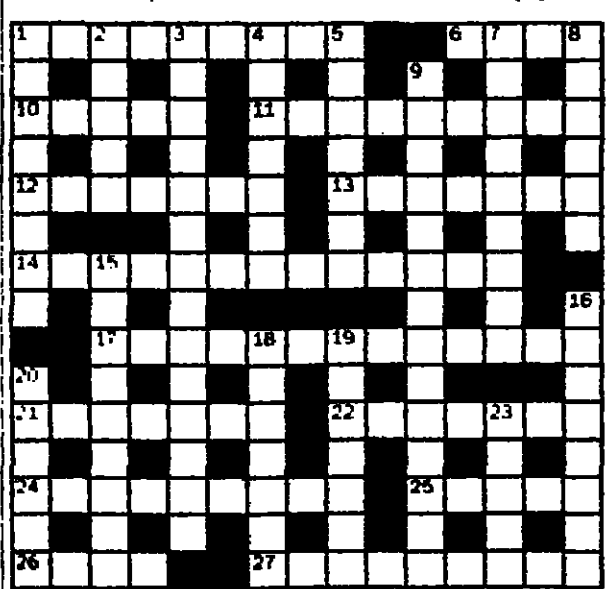
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THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No. 3168, Thursday 12 December

By Stephen



- ACROSS**
- Initially engineering squad cut out water-channels (9)
 - Exotic bird is found around British Isles (4)
 - So long as letters of gold appear on either side of slump (5)
 - Rare English article used by French - crazy (9)
 - Man in the outskirts of Canberra, remarkably fast runner (7)
 - Further exercises incorporating Roman books (7)
 - Facts bottled up, in the classic way? (2, 4, 7)
 - "Some day my prints will come" the patient hope of his customers? (14, 9)
 - Woman in yellow getting into police car (7)
 - Grain that is milled in African country (7)
 - I'm adorning exterior with garish le's features (9)
 - Indian holy man's unbecoming dash to university (5)
 - River Plate estuary partly blocked (4)
 - Rest until we negotiate partner (9)
 - An Arabic style that's against all the rules? (8)
 - Italian's put in a French treat (5)
 - He's sceptical, but will get involved in studying Welsh poet? (8, 6)
 - His uncle and sisters have appeared on stage (7)
 - Ring secret agent (7)

- DOWN**
- Shakespearean character raised master which gets cheers (7, 2)
 - Economical type putting pound in plate (6)
 - Medicine men of old? (14)
 - Card signalling strong heart suit? (9)
 - Adjustment of rates by Yorkshire Water offering value (8)
 - Regular writer mounting attack first (7)
 - Raving ecstatically about oriental flavour enhancer? (7)
 - Metal casting found in bonzer in a barrel tap (6)
 - Lines turning up in Rossetti, I dare say (5)

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